

KILLYKINICK

BY

MARY T. WAGGAMAN



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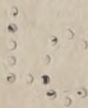
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KILLYKINICK

By MARY T. WAGGAMAN

Author of

"Billy Boy," "The Secret of Pocomoke,"
"White Eagle," "Tommy
Travers," etc.



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no. 1

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I.—THE “LEFT OVERS.”

It was the week after Commencement. The corridors, class-rooms, and study hall of Saint Andrew's stretched in dim, silent vistas; over the tennis court and the playground there brooded a dead calm; the field, scene of so many strenuous struggles, lay bare and still in the summer sunlight; the quadrangle, that so lately had rung to parting cheer and “yell,” might have been a cloister for midnight ghosts to walk. The only sign or sound of life came from the open archways of the Gym, where the “left overs” (as the boys who for various reasons had been obliged to summer at Saint Andrew's) were working off the steam condensed, as Jim Norris declared, to the “busting” point by the last seven days.

A city-bound college has its limitations, and vacation at Saint Andrew's promised to be a very dull affair indeed. The “left overs” had tried everything to kill time.

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At present their efforts seemed bent on killing themselves; for Jim Norris and Dud Fielding, sturdy fellows of fourteen, were doing stunts on the flying trapeze worthy of professional acrobats; while Dan Dolan, swinging from a high bar, was urging little Fred Neville to a precarious poise on his shoulder.

Freddy was what may be called a perennial "left over." He had been the "kid" of Saint Andrew's since he was five years old, when his widowed father had left him in a priestly uncle's care, and had disappeared no one knew how or where. And as Uncle Tom's chosen path lay along hard, lofty ways that small boys could not follow, Fred had been placed by special privilege in Saint Andrew's to grow up into a happy boyhood, the pet and plaything of the house. He was eleven now, with the fair face and golden hair of his dead girl-mother, and brown eyes that had a boyish sparkle all their own.

They looked up dubiously at Dan now,— "daring Dan," who for the last year had been Freddy's especial chum; and to be long-legged, sandy-haired, freckle-nosed Dan's chum was an honor indeed for a

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small boy of eleven. Dan wore frayed collars and jackets much too small for him; his shoes were stubby-toed and often patched; he made pocket money in various ways, by "fagging" and odd jobbing for the big boys of the college. But he led the classes and games of the Prep with equal success; and even now the Latin class medal was swinging from the breast of his shabby jacket.

Dan had been a newsboy in very early youth; but, after a stormy and often broken passage through the parochial school, he had won a scholarship at Saint Andrew's over all competitors.

"An' ye'll be the fool to take it," Aunt Winny had said when he brought the news home to the little attic rooms where she did tailor's finishing, and took care of Dan as well as a crippled old grandaunt could. "With all them fine gentlemen's sons looking down on ye for a beggar!"

"Let them look," Dan had said philosophically. "Looks don't hurt, Aunt Win. It's my chance and I'm going to take it."

And he was taking it bravely when poor Aunt Win's rheumatic knees broke down utterly, and she had to go to the "Little

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Sisters," leaving Dan to summer with the other "left overs" at Saint Andrew's.

"Swing up," he repeated, stretching a sturdy hand to Fred. "Don't be a sissy. One foot on each of my shoulders, and catch on to the bar above my head. That will steady you."

Freddy hesitated. It was rather a lofty height for one of his size.

"You can't hold me," he said. "I'm too heavy."

"Too heavy!" repeated Dan, laughing down on the slender, dapper little figure at his feet. "Gee whilakins, I wouldn't even *feel* you!"

This was too much for any eleven-year-old to stand. Freddy was not very well. Brother Timothy had been dosing him for a week or more, and these long hot summer days made his legs feel queer and his head dizzy. It was rather hard sometimes to keep up with Dan, who was making the most of his holiday, as he did of everything that came in his way. Freddy was following him loyally, in spite of the creeps and chills that betrayed malaria. But now his brown eyes flashed fire.

"You're a big brag, Dan Dolan!" he

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said, stung by such a taunt at his size and weight. "Just you try me!"

And, catching Dan's hand, he made a spring to his waist and a reckless scramble to his shoulders.

"Hooray!" said Dan, cheerily. "Steady now, and hold on to the bar!"

"Do you feel me?" asked Fred, pressing down with all his small weight on the sturdy figure beneath him.

"A mite!" answered Dan. "Sort of like a mosquito had lit on me up there."

"Do you fell me now?" said Fred, bringing his heels down with a dig.

"Look out now!" cried Dan, sharply. "Don't try dancing a jig up there. Hold to the bar."

But the warning came too late. The last move was too much for the half-sick boy. Freddy's head began to turn, his legs gave way—he reeled down to the floor, and, white and senseless, lay at Dan's feet.

In the big, book-lined study beyond the quadrangle, Father Regan was settling final accounts prior to the series of "retreats" he had promised for the summer; while Brother Bart, ruddy and wrinkled as a

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winter apple, "straightened up,"—gathering waste paper and pamphlets as his superior cast them aside, dusting bookshelves and mantel, casting the while many an anxious, watchful glance through the open window. The boys were altogether too quiet this morning. Brother Bart distrusted boyish quiet. For the "Laddie," as he had called Freddy since the tiny boy had been placed six years ago in his special care, was the idol of the good man's heart. He had washed and dressed and tended him in those early years with almost a woman's tenderness, and was watching with jealous anxiety as Laddie turned from childish ways into paths beyond his care. Dan Dolan was Brother Bart's especial fear,—Dan Dolan, who belonged to the rough outside world from which Laddie had been shielded; Dan Dolan, who, despite tickets and medals, Brother Bart felt was no mate for a little gentleman like his boy.

"They're quarely still this morning," he said at last, giving voice to his fear. "I'm thinking they are at no good."

"Who?" asked Father Regan, looking up from the letter he was reading.

"The boys," answered Brother Bart,—

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“the four of them that was left over with us.”

“Four of them?” repeated the Father, who, with the closing of the schools, had felt the burden of his responsibilities drop. “True, true! I quite forgot we have four boys with us. It must be dull for the poor fellows.”

“Dull!” echoed Brother Bart, grimly,—“dull is it, yer reverence? It’s in some divilment they are from morning until night. There’s no rule for vacation days, as Mr. Linton says; and so the four of them are running wild as red Indians, up in the bell tower, and in the ice pond that’s six feet deep with black water, and scampering over the highest ledge of the dormitory roof, till my heart nearly leaps from my mouth.”

“Poor fellows!” said Father Regan, indulgently. “It’s hard on them, of course. Let me see! Colonel Fielding and his wife are in the Philippines, I remember, and asked to leave Dudley with us; and Judge Norris couldn’t take Will with him to Japan; and there’s our own little Fred of course,—we always have him; and—”

“That dare-devil of a Dan Dolan, that’s

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the worst of all!" burst forth Brother Bart, "It's for me sins he was left here, I know; with the Laddie following everywhere he leads, like he was bewitched."

"Poor Danny! Aren't you a little hard on him, Brother Bart?" was the smiling question.

"Sure I am, I am,—God forgive me for that same!" answered Brother Bart, penitently. "But I'm no saint like the rest of ye; and Laddie crept into me heart six years ago, and I can't put him out. Wild Dan Dolan is no fit mate for him."

"Why not?" asked Father Regan, gravely, though there was a quizzical gleam in his eye.

"Sure, because—because—" hesitated Brother Bart, rather staggered by the question. "Sure ye know yerself, Father."

"No, I don't," was the calm reply. "Dan may be wild and mischievous—a little rough perhaps, poor boy!—but he will do Freddy no harm. He is a bright, honest, manly fellow, making a brave fight against odds that are hard to face; and we must give him his chance, Brother Bart. I promised his good old aunt, who was broken-hearted at leaving him, that

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I would do all I could for her friendless, homeless boy. As for mischief—well, I rather like a spice of mischief at his age. It is a sign of good health, body and soul. But we must try to give it a safer outlet than roofs and bell towers,” he added thoughtfully. “Let me see! If we could send our ‘left overs’ some place where they could have more freedom. Why—why, now that I think of it” (the speaker’s grave face brightened as he took up the letter he had been reading), “maybe there’s a chance for them right here. Father Tom Rayburn has just written me that Freddy has fallen heir to some queer old place on the New England coast. It belonged to his mother’s great-uncle, an old whaling captain, who lived there after an eccentric fashion of his own. It seems that his ship was stranded on this island more than fifty years ago, and he fixed up the wreck, and lived there until his death this past month. The place has no value, Father Tom thinks; but he spent two of the jolliest summers of his own boyhood with old Captain Kane at Killykinick.”

“Killykinick?” echoed Brother Bart.
“That sound Irish, Father.”

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"It does," laughed Father Regan. "Perhaps the old captain was an Irishman. At any rate, there he lived, showing a light every night at his masthead to warn other ships off,—which was quite unnecessary of course, as the government attends to all such matters now."

"It must be a quare sort of a place," said Brother Bart, doubtfully. "But it might do the Laddie good to get a whiff of the salt air and a swim in the sea. He isn't well, Brother Timothy says, and as everyone can see. He has a touch of the fever every day; and as for weight, Dan Dolan would make two of him. And his mother died before she was five and twenty. God's holy will be done!" Brother Bart's voice broke at the words. "But I'm thinking Laddie isn't long for this world, Father. There's an angel-look in his face that I don't like to see." And the old Brother shook his head lugubriously.

Father Regan laughed.

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about that! I've seen plenty of just such angels, Brother Bart, and they grew up into very hardy, mortal men, who had to scuffle their way through life like the rest of us. But Freddy

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is looking a little peaked of late, as I noticed on Commencement Day. I think that, as you say, a breath of salt air would be good for him. We might send all four off together to this place of his."

"Is it Dan Dolan with the rest?" asked Brother Bart, in dismay.

"Why, of course! We couldn't keep poor Dan here all alone," was the answer.

"He'll have Laddie climbing the rocks and swimming the seas like—like a wild Indian," said the good man, despairingly.

"What! That angel boy of yours, Brother Bart?" laughed the priest.

"Aye, aye!" answered the good Brother. "I'm not denying that Laddie has a wild streak in him. It came from his poor young father, I suppose. Arrah! has there never been word or sign from him, Father?" queried Brother Bart, sorrowfully.

"Never," was the grave reply,—“not since he disappeared so strangely six years ago. I presume he is dead. He had been rather a wild young fellow; but after his wife's death he changed completely, reproached himself for having, as he said, broken her heart, and got some morbid notion of not being a fit father for his

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child. He had lost his faith and was altogether unbalanced, poor man! Luckily, Freddy inherits a fortune from his mother, and is well provided for; and now comes this other heritage from the old great-uncle—Killykinick. I really think—O God bless me! What is the matter?” asked the speaker, turning with a start, as, reckless of rules and reverence, two white-faced boys burst unannounced into the room.

“It’s—it’s—it’s Freddy Neville, Father!” panted Jim Norris.

“Laddie,—my Laddie! What’s come to him?” cried Brother Bart.

“He’s tumbled off the high bar,” gasped Dud Fielding, “and he is lying all white and still, and—and dead, Father!”

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II.—OLD TOP.

THERE was a hurried rush to the scene of accident; but first aid to the injured had already been rendered. Freddy lay on the Gym floor, pillowed on Dan's jacket, and reviving under the ministration of a sturdy hand and a very wet and grimy pocket-handkerchief.

"What did you go tumbling off like that for?" asked Dan indignantly, as the "angel eyes" of his patient opened.

"Don't know," murmured Freddy, faintly.

"I told you to stand steady, and you didn't,—you jumped!" said Dan.

"So—so you'd feel me," answered Fred, memory returning as the darkness began to brighten, and Brother Bart and Brother Timothy and several other anxious faces started out of the breaking clouds. "But I'm not hurt,—I'm not hurt a bit, Brother Bart."

"Blessed be God for that same!" cried the good Brother, brokenly, as, after close examination, Brother Timothy agreed to

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this opinion. "And it wasn't the fault of the rapsCALLIONS wid ye that ye're not killed outright. To be swinging like monkeys from a perch, and ye half sick and light-headed! Put him in the bed, Brother Timothy; and keep him there till we see what comes of this."

So Freddy was put to bed in the dim quiet of the infirmary, to watch developments. Brother Timothy gave him an old-fashioned "draught," and he went to sleep most comfortably. He woke up feeling very well indeed, to enjoy an appetizing repast of chicken broth and custard. But when this went on for two days, Freddy began to grow restless.

Infirmary life was very well in school time; indeed, when there were several other patients not too sick to share its luxuries, it proved rather a pleasant break in the routine of class-room and study-hall. In fact, a late epidemic of measles that filled every bed had been a "lark" beyond Brother Timothy's suppression. But the infirmary in vacation, with no chance for the pillow fights that had made the "measles" so hilarious, with no boy in the next bed to exchange confidences and

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reminiscences, with no cheery shouts and yells rising from the playground and quadrangle, with only the long stretch of bare, spotless rooms, white cots, and Brother Timothy rolling pills in the "doctor shop," the infirmary was dull and dready indeed.

"Can't I get up to-day, Brother?" asked Freddy on the third morning, as Brother Timothy took away a breakfast tray cleared to the last crumb of toast.

"No," replied the Brother, who from long dealing with small boys had acquired the stony calm of a desert sphinx. Beneath it he was a gentle, patient, wise old saint, who watched and prayed over his patients in a way they little guessed. "No, you can't."

"Gee!" said Freddy, with a rebellious kick at the counterpane. "The bump on my head is gone, and I'm not sick at all."

"We're not so sure of that," answered Brother Tim. "You've had temperature."

"What's 'temperature'?" asked Freddy, roused with interest.

"Never mind what it is, but you'll have to stay here till it goes," answered Brother Tim, with decision.

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And Freddy could only lay back on his pillows in hopeless gloom, watching the shadows of the big elm by his window flickering over curtain and coverlet. The great elm—or “Old Top,” as it had been affectionately called by generations of students—was the pride of the college grounds. Many a newcomer felt his heart warm to his strange surroundings when he found the name of father or grandfather cut into the rough bark, where men who had made later marks on history’s page had left youthful sign manual. More than once the growth of the college buildings had threatened to encroach upon Old Top; but the big elm held its prior claim, and new dormitory or infirmary was set back that it might rule with kingly right in its historic place.

Many were the stories and legends of which Old Top was the hero. In the “great fire” its boughs had proven a ladder of safety before modern “escapes” were known. Civil-War veterans told of hunted scouts hiding, all unknown to the Fathers, in its spreading branches; while the students’ larks and frolics to which it had lent indulgent ear were ancient his-

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tory at many a grandfather's fireside.

But, like all things earthly, the big tree was growing old; a barbed wire fencing surrounded the aging trunk, and effectively prohibited climbing the rotten and unsafe branches. Even cutting names was forbidden. Freddy had been the last allowed, as the "kid" of the house, to put his initials beneath his fathers. It had been quite an occasion, his eleventh birthday. There had been a party (Freddy always had ten dollars to give a party on his birthday); and then, surrounded by his guests, still gratefully appreciative of unlimited ice cream and strawberries, he had carefully cut "F. W. N. 19—" beneath the same signature of twenty years ago. It was then too hilarious an occasion for sad reflection; but, lying alone in the infirmary to-day, Freddy's memories took doleful form as he recalled the "F. W. N." above his own, and began to think of the father who had vanished so utterly from his young life.

He had only the vaguest recollection of a tall, handsome "daddy" who had tossed him up in his arms and frolicked and laughed with him in a very dim, early

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youth. He could recall more clearly the stern, silent man of later years, of whom the five-year-boy had been a little afraid. And he retained a vivid memory of one bewildering evening in the dusky parlor of Saint Andrew's when a shaking, low voiced father had held him tight to his breast for one startling moment, and then whispered hoarsely in his ear, "Good-bye, my little son,—good-bye forever!" It was very sad, as Freddy realized to-day (he had never considered the matter seriously before),—very sad to have a father bid you good-bye forever. And to have your mother dead, too,—such a lovely mother! Freddy had, in his small trunk, a picture of her that was as pretty as any of the angels on the chapel windows. And now he had "temperature," and maybe he was going to die, too, like some of those very good little boys of whom Father Martin read aloud on Sundays.

Freddy's spirits were sinking into a sunless gloom, when suddenly there came a whistle through the open window,—a whistle that made him start up breathless on his pillow. For only one boy in Saint Andrew's could achieve that clear high

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note. It was Dan Dolan calling,—but how, where? Freddy's window was four stories high, without porch or fire escape, and that whistle was almost in his ear. He pursed up his trembling lips and whistled back.

"Hi!" came a cautious voice, and the leafy shadows of Old Top waved violently. "You're there, are you? Brother Tim around?"

"No," answered Freddy.

"Then I'll swing in for a minute." And, with another wild shake of Old Top, Dan bestrode the window ledge,—a most cheery-looking Dan, grinning broadly.

"How—how did you get up?" asked Freddy, thinking of the barbed wire defences below.

"Dead easy," answered Dan. "Just swung across from the organ-loft windows. They wouldn't let me come up and see you. Brother Bart, the old softy, said I'd excite you. What's the matter, anyhow? Is it the tumble—or typhoid?"

"Neither," said Fred. "I feel fine, but Brother Tim says I've got temperature."

"What's that?" asked Dan.

"I don't know," replied Freddy. "You

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better not come too near, or you may catch it."

"Pooh, no!" said Dan, who was poised easily on his lofty perch. "I never catch anything. But I'll keep ready for a jump, or Brother Tim will catch me, and there will be trouble for sure. And as for Brother Bart, I don't know what he'd do if he thought I had come near you. Jing! but he gave it to me hot and heavy about letting you get that tumble! He needn't. I felt bad enough about it already."

"Oh, did you, Dan?" asked Fred, quite overcome by such an admission.

"Rotten!" was the emphatic answer.

"Couldn't eat any dinner, though we had cherry dumpling. And Brother Bart rubbed it in, saying I had killed you. Then I got the grumps, and when Dud Fielding gave me some of his sass we had a knock-out fight that brought Father Rector down on us good and strong. I tell you it's been tough lines all around. And this is what you call—vacation!" concluded Dan, sarcastically.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" said Freddy. "The tumble didn't hurt me much. I guess I was sort of sick anyhow. And to fight

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Dud Fielding!" The speaker's eyes sparkled. "Oh, I bet you laid him out, Dan!"

"Didn't I, though! Shut up one eye, and made that Grecian nose of his look like a turnip. It ain't down yet," answered Dan, with satisfaction. "He fired me up talking about Aunt Win."

"Oh, did he?" asked Freddy, sympathetically.

"Yes: said I ought to be ditch-digging to keep her out of the poorhouse, instead of pushing in with respectable boys here. Sometimes I think that myself," added Dan in another tone "But it wasn't any of that blamed plute's business to knock it into me."

"But it isn't true: your aunt isn't in the poorhouse, Dan?" said Freddy, eagerly.

"Well, no, not exactly," answered Dan. "But she is with the Little Sisters, which is next thing to it. And I ain't like the rest of you, I know; and don't need Dud Fielding to tell me. But just let me get a good start and I'll show folks what Dan Dolan can do. I'll be ready for something better than a newsboy or a boot-black."

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"O Dan, you'll never be anything like that!" said Freddy, in dismay.

"I have been," was the frank reply. "Given many a good shine for a nickel. Could sell more papers than any little chap on the street. Was out before day on winter mornings to get them hot from the press, when I hadn't turned seven years old. But I ain't going back to it,—no, sir!" Dan's lips set themselves firmly. "I'm on the climb. Maybe I won't get very far, but I've got my foot on the ladder. I'm going to hold my own against Dud Fielding and all his kind, no matter how they push; and I told Father Rector that yesterday when they were plastering up Dud's eye and nose."

"O Dan, you didn't!"

"Yes, I did. I was just boiling up, and had to bust out, I guess. And when he lectured us about being gentlemen, I told him I didn't aim at anything like that. I wasn't made for it, as I knew; but I was made to be a man, and I was going to hold up like one, and stand no shoving."

"O Dan!" gasped Freddy, breathlessly. "And—and what did he say?"

"Nothing," answered Dan, grimly.

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“But, from the looks of things, I rather guess I’m in for a ticket of leave. That’s why I’m up here. Couldn’t go off without seeing you,—telling you how sorry I was I let you get that fall off my shoulders. I oughtn’t to have dared a kid like you to fool-tricks like that. I was a big dumb-head, and I’d like to kick myself for it. For I think more of you than any other boy in the college, little or big,—I surely do. And I’ve brought you something, so when I’m gone you won’t forget me.”

And Dan dived into his pocket and brought out a round disk of copper about the size of a half dollar. It was rimmed with silver and engraven with some foreign crest, and name and date.

“An old sailor man gave it to me,” said Dan, as he reached over to Freddy’s bed and handed him the treasure. He was a one-legged old chap that used to sit down on the wharf sort of dazed and batty, until the boys roused him by pelting and hooting at him; and then he’d fire back curse words at them that would raise your hair. It was mean of them, for he was old and lame and sick; and one day I just lit out at a couple of measly little chaps and ducked them

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overboard for their sass. After that we were sort of friends, me and old 'Nutty,' as everyone called him. I'd buy his tobacco and beer for him, and give him an old paper now and then; and when he got down and out for good Aunt Win made me go for the priest for him and see him through. He gave me this at the last. He had worn it on a string around his neck, and seemed to think it was something grand. It's a medal for bravery that the poor old chap had won more than forty years ago. Ben Wharton offered me a dollar for it to put in his museum, but I wouldn't sell it. It seemed sort of mean to sell poor old Nutty's medal. But I'd like to give it to you, so you'll remember me when I've gone."

"Oh, but you're not—not going away, Dan!" said Freddy. "And I can't take your medal, anyhow. I'd remember you without it. You're the best chum I ever had,—the very best. And—and—"

The speaker broke off, stammering; for a second visitor had suddenly appeared at his bedside: Father Regan who had entered the infirmary unheard and unseen, and who now stood with his eyes fixed in grave displeasure on the daring Dan.

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III.—A JUDGMENT.

"DAN DOLAN!" said Father Regan, as the reckless interloper flushed and paled beneath his steady gaze.

"Dan Dolan!" echoed Brother Tim, who had come in behind his honored visitor. "How ever did he get past me! I've been saying my beads at the door without this half hour."

"Swung in by Old Top," ventured Dan, feeling concealment was vain.

"Old Top!" repeated the rector. "You dared Old Top at this height, when scarcely a bough is sound! You must be mad, boy. It is God's mercy that you did not break your neck. Don't you know the tree is unsafe?"

"Yes, Father," answered Dan. "But—but I had to see Freddy again, and they wouldn't let me come up. I just *had* to see him, if it killed me."

And there was a sudden break in the young voice that startled his hearer. But a glance at the dizzy and forbidden height of Old Top and Father Regan was stern again.

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"Why did you have to see him, if it killed you?" he asked briefly.

"Because I wanted to tell how bad I felt about letting him get hurt, because—because he has been better to me than any boy in the school, because—because—" (again Dan's tone grew husky) "I just had to bid Freddy good-bye."

"O Father, no, no!" Freddy burst forth tremulously. "Don't let him say good-bye! Don't send Dan away, Father, please! He won't fight any more,—will you, Dan?"

"I am not promising that," answered Dan, sturdily. "I won't stand shoving and knocking, not even to keep my place here."

"O Dan!" cried Freddy, in dismay at such an assertion. "Why, you said you would work day and night to stay at Saint Andrew's!"

"Work, yes," replied Dan, gruffly. "I don't mind work, but I won't ever play lickspittle."

"And is that the way ye'd be talking before his reverence?" broke in Brother Tim, indignantly. "Get out of the infirmary this minute, Dan Dolan; for its the devil's own pride that is on yer lips

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and in yer heart, God forgive ye for saying it!"

"We'll settle this later," said Father Regan, quietly. "Go down to my study, Dan, and wait for me. I have a message for Freddy from his uncle."

"O Dan, Dan!" (There was a sob in the younger boy's voice as he felt all this parting might mean.) "I'll—I'll miss you dreadfully, Dan!"

"Don't!" said Dan, gripping his little comrade's hand. "I ain't worth missing. I'm glad I came, anyhow, to say good-bye and good-luck, Freddy!" And he turned away at the words, with something shining in his blue eyes that Father Regan knew was not all defiance.

It was a long wait in the study. Dan had plenty of time to think, and his thoughts were not very cheerful. He felt he had lost his chance,—the chance that had been to him like the sudden opening of a gate in the grim stone wall of circumstances that had surrounded him,—a gate beyond which stretched free, sunlit paths to heights of which he had never dreamed. He had lost his chance; for a free scholarship at Saint Andrew's de-

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pended on good conduct and observance of rules as well a study; and Dan felt he had doubly and trebly forfeited his claim. But he would not whine. Perhaps it was only the plucky spirit of the street Arab that filled his breast, perhaps something stronger and nobler that steadied his lip and kindled his eye, as he looked around the spacious, book-lined room, and realized all that he was losing—had lost. For Dan loved his books,—the hard-earned scholarship proved it. Many a midnight hour had found him, wrapped in his worn blankets, studying by the light of a flaring candle-end stuck perilously on his bedpost, after good Aunt Win had thriftily put out the lamp, and believed Danny was sound asleep preparatory to a start on his beat at break of day.

“One of the brightest, clearest, quickest minds I ever knew,” Dan’s teacher had told Father Regan when awarding the scholarship,—“if he can only keep the track. But he has a bold spirit, and it will be hard on him among all those ‘high-steppers’ of yours at Saint Andrew’s. He is likely to bolt and break away.”

But Dan had been too busy with his

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books all the year to mind "high-steppers." His patched jacket kept the head of the classes, and his stubby-toed shoes marched up every month to get the ticket, and he had helped more than one heavy-witted "high-stepper" through conditions that threatened to put him out of the race. Most of the Saint Andrew's boys were manly youngsters, with whom jackets and shoes did not count against brain and brawn; and strong, clever, quick-witted Dan had held his place in schoolroom and playground unquestioned. But there were exceptions, and Dud Fielding was one of them. He had disliked the "poor scholar" from the first. Dud was a tall, handsome fellow, filled with ideas of his own importance; and Dan had downed him more than once in field and class-room, to his great disgust. Worse than all, in appreciation of his careful costuming, Dan had alluded to him as "Dudey,"—a boyish liberty which, considering the speaker's patched jacket, Master Fielding could not forgive. It was the repetition of this remark, when Dud had appeared garbed in a summer suit of spotless linen, that had precipitated yesterday's fight.

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Altogether, with all the restraints and interests of school time removed, vacation was proving a perilous period to the "left-overs" at Saint Andrew's. Dan realized this as, turing his back on the book-lined room, with his hands thrust in his pockets, looking gloomily out of the broad window that opened on the quadrangle, he stood awaiting "judgment." He expected no mercy: he felt grimly he had no claim to it. Maybe if he had a rich father or uncle or somebody grand and great to speak up for him, he might be given another chance; but a poor boy who, as Dud Fielding said, ought to be "ditch digging"—Dan choked up again at the thought that, after all, perhaps Dud was right: he was not the sort to be pushing in here. He ought to be out in his own rough world, working his own rough way. All those fancies of his for better, higher things had been only "pipe dreams."

But jing, it would be hard to give up! Dan looked out at the quadrangle where he had led so many a merry game; at the ball field, scene of battle and victory that even Dud Fielding could not dispute; at the long stretch of the study hall

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windows opposite; at the oriel of the chapel beyond. All spoke to him of a life that had been like air and sunshine to a plant stretching its roots and tendrils in the dark.

And he must leave it all! He must go back again to the old ways, the old work! He was big enough now to drive a butcher's wagon, or clean fish and stuff sausages at Pete Patterson's market store; or—or—there were other things he could do that a fellow like him must do when he is "down and out." And while he still stared from the window, the grim, dogged look settling heavier upon his young face, Dan caught a footstep behind him, and turned to face Father Regan.

"I've kept you waiting longer than I expected, Dan, but I had great news for Freddy,—news that took some time to tell." The speaker sank into the tall stiff-backed chair known to many a young sinner as the "judgment seat." "Now" (the clear, keen eyes fixed themselves gravely on the boy) "I want to have a talk with you. Things can not go on in this way any longer, even in vacation time. I must say that, after the last

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year's good record, I am disappointed in you, Dan,—sorely disappointed."

"I'm sorry, Father," was the respectful answer, but the grim, hard look on the young face did not change. "I've made a lot of trouble, I know."

"You have," was the grave answer, "and trouble I did not expect from you. Still, circumstances have been against you, I must confess. But this does not alter the fact that you have broken strict rules that even in vacation we can not relax,—broken them deliberately and recklessly. You are evidently impatient of the restraint here at Saint Andrew's; so I have concluded not to keep you here any longer, Dan."

"I'm not asking it, Father." Dan tried bravely to steady voice and lip. "I'm ready to go whenever you say."

"To-morrow, then," continued Father Regan,—“I've made arrangements for you to leave to-morrow at ten. Brother Francis will see that your trunk is packed to-night."

"Yes, Father," said Dan, somewhat bewildered at the friendly tone in which this sentence was delivered. "I'd like to see Mr. Raymond and Mr. Shipman

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before I go, and thank them for all they've done for me; and Father Roach and Father Walsh and all of them; and to say I'm sorry I made any trouble."

"Good gracious," laughed Father Regan, "one would think you were on your dying bed, boy!"

"I—I feel like it," blurted out Dan, no longer able to choke down the lump in his throat. "I'd rather die, a good deal."

"Rather die!" exclaimed Father Regan,—"rather die than go to Killykinick!"

"Killykinick!" echoed Dan, breathlessly. "Your're not—not sending me to a Reform, Father?"

"Reform!" repeated the priest.

"For I won't go," said Dan, desperately. "You haven't any right to put me there. I'm not wild and bad enough for that. I'll keep honest and respectable. I'll go to work. I can get a job at Pete Patterson's sausage shop to-morrow."

"Reform! Sausage shop! What are you talking about, you foolish boy, when I am only sending you all off for a summer holiday at the seashore?"

"A summer holiday at the seashore!" echoed Dan in bewilderment.

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"Yes, at Freddy's place—Killykinick. I have just heard from his uncle, and he thinks it would be a fine thing to send Freddy up there to shake off his malaria. There's a queer old house that his great-uncle left him, and an old sailor who still lives there to look out for things; and all the boating, bathing, swimming, fishing a set of lively young fellows can want; so I am going to ship you all off there to-morrow morning with Brother Bart. It's plain you can't stand six weeks of vacation here, especially when there will be a general retreat for the Fathers next month. You see, I simply have to send you away."

"And you mean—you mean—" (Dan's voice trembled, his eyes shone,)—"you mean I can come back?"

"Come back, of course, when school opens."

"Jing!" said Dan, drawing a long breath. "I—I thought you were putting me out for good and all. I thought, with the fight and the climb and hurting Freddy I—I had done for myself. I thought—" Here Dan's feelings became too much for him, and he could only gulp down the sob that rose in his throat, with a look

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that went to Father Regan's kind heart.

"My poor bōy, no, no! Put you out of Saint Andrew's for good and all! I never thought of such a thing for a moment. Of course I object seriously to fighting, to your reckless venture to Old Top; but—well, you had strong temptations, and in vacation time one must not be too severe. At Killykinick there will be more elbow-room. Have you ever been to the seashore?"

"Never farther than the wharfs. But I can swim and dive and float," answered Dan, wisely reserving the information that, as a member of the "Wharf Rats," he had been ducked overboard at the age of six, to sink or swim.

"Good!" said Father Regan. "Then you'll have a fine time. And I am depending on you to look out for the other boys. They have grown up in softer ways, and are not used to roughing it, as it is likely you will have to rough it at Killykinick. But it will be good for you all,—for you all," repeated the speaker cheerily, as he saw in Dan's brightening face the joyful relief the boy did not know how to speak. "And you will come back ready for

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double 'X' work in the fall. I am looking for great things from you, Dan. You've made a fine start, my boy! Keep it up, and some day you will be signing all the capital letters to Dan Dolan's name that Saint Andrew's can bestow."

"Sure I don't know about that, Father," said Dan, his speech softening into Aunt Winnie's Irish tones with the warming of his heart. "You're very good to me, but sometimes I think—well, what I thrashed Dud Fielding for telling me: that I've no right to be pushing into a grand school like this. I ought to keep my place."

"And where is your place?" was the calm question.

"Sure, sure—" Dan hesitated as he recalled a very checkered childhood. "Now that Aunt Winnie is all broke up, I can't say, Father."

"Then I will tell you, my boy! Just now, by the goodness and guidance of God, it is here,—here, where you have equal rights with any boy in the school. You have won them in winning your scholarship; they are yours as justly as if you had a father paying a thousand a year. There may be a little rough

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rubbing now and then from fellows like Dud Fielding; but—well, everything that is worth having has its cost. So stand to your colors! Be, as you said yesterday, neither a bully nor a coward, but a man. Now go to see Aunt Winnie and bid her good-bye. Tell her I am sending you off for the jolliest kind of a holiday to Killykinick."

"I—I don't know how to thank you, Father!" stammered Dan, feeling that his blackened sky had suddenly burst into rainbow light.

"Don't try," was the kind answer. "I understand, Dan. God bless you, my boy!"

And, laying his hand for a moment on Dan's sandy thatch of hair, Father Regan dismissed the case.

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IV.—AUNT WINNIE.

It was a delighted Dan that bounded down the broad staircase and took a flying leap from the stone portico of the great hall door. "Hello!" said Jim Norris, who was lazily stretched on the grass, reading. "Is that a jump or a kick out?"

"A jump," answered Dan, grinning: "though I was primed for the other, sure. How is Dudey's nose?"

"Coming down," said Jim, who was an easy-going mixer, whom everybody liked. "About the size and shape of a spring radish to-day. My, but he's hot against you, Dan! Look out for him! Snake in the grass is nothing to Dud Fielding on the boil. Won't even rattle fairly before he strikes."

"Wouldn't take the glad hand if I stretched it out to him and said I was sorry?" asked Dan. "Just now I feel like being at peace with everybody."

"Not much!" said Jim, impressively. "Or if he did there would be a snake stinging ready for you, all the same. I know

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Dud Fielding. 'He'll get even with you if he dies for it.'

"All right!" was the cheerful reply. "Let him get even then. Have you heard about Killykinick, Jim?"

"Yes: Father Regan told me. I don't know what or where it is, but I'm ready for a start if it's a cannibal isle. Anything is better than dying of dulness here. Where are you off so fast, Dan?"

"To see my aunt. She—she—" There was a moment's hesitation, for Dan knew all the admission meant to boys like Jim. But he added boldly: "She is at the Little Sisters', you know, and I want to bid her good-bye before I leave."

"Of course you do. These old aunts are great," said Jim, with a friendly nod. "I've got one myself up in the country. Wears bonnets and gowns that look as if they came out of the Ark. But, golly, she can make doughnuts and apple pies that beat the band! I'd rather spend a week at Aunt Selina's than any place I know. Going to walk or ride, Dan?"

"Walk," was the answer. "I generally do. It's good for my health."

"Not on a day like this. I've got a

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pocketful of car tickets," said Jim, shaking a dozen or so out on the grass. "We'll have no use for them at Killykinick. Help yourself."

"No," said Dan, sturdily. "Thank you all the same, Jim! But I don't mind walking a bit. I'll match you at a game of tennis when I get back, and do you up."

"All right!" answered Jim, who, though slow and lazy and a bit dull at his books, was a gentleman through and through. Three generations of Norrises had cut their names on Old Top.

And, lighter hearted for this friendliness, Dan kept on his way by short cuts and cross streets until he reached the quiet suburb where the modest buildings of the "Little Sisters" stretched long and wide behind their grey stone walls. He was admitted by a brisk, kind little old woman, who was serving as portress; and, after some parley, was shown up into Aunt Winnie's room. It was spotless in its cleanliness and bare save for the most necessary articles of furniture. There were three other old ladies about in various stages of decrepitude, who seemed only dully conscious of Dan's appearance; but

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Aunt Winnie, seated in her armchair by the window, started up in tremulous rapture at sight of her boy. Despite her age and infirmity, she was still a trig little body, with snow-white hair waved about a kind old wrinkled face and dim soft eyes, that filled with tears at "Danny's" boyish hug and kiss.

"It's a long time ye've been coming," she said reproachfully. "I thought ye were forgetting me entirely, Danny lad."

"Forgetting you!" echoed Dan. "Now, you know better than to talk like that, Aunt Win. I'm thinking of you day and night. I've got no one else to think of but you, Aunt Win."

"Whisht now,—whisht!" Aunt Winnie sank her voice to a whisper, and nodded cautiously towards the nearest old lady. "She do be listening, lad. I've told them all of the grand, great college ye're at, and the fine, bright lad ye are, but I've told them nothing more. Ye're not to play the poor scholar here."

"Oh, I see!" said Dan, grinning. "Go on with your game then, Aunt Win."

"I'm not looking to be remembered," Aunt Winnie continued dolefully. "What

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with all the French and Latin ye have to study, and the ball playing that you're doing, I can't look for you to think of a poor lone lame woman like me."

"Aunt Win!" burst forth Dan, impetuously.

"Whisht!" murmured Aunt Win again, with a glance at the old lady who was blinking sleepily. "Don't ye be giving yerself away. And I suppose it's the fine holiday that ye're having now wid the rest of yer mates," she went on.

"Yes," said Dan, feeling he could truthfully humor the old lady's harmless pride here. "We're off to-morrow for the jolliest sort of a time at the seashore. Freddy Neville, the nicest little chap in college, has a place up somewhere on the New England coast, and four of us are going there for the summer."

And Danny launched into eager details that made Aunt Winnie's eyes open indeed. But there was a little quiver in her voice when she spoke.

"Ah, that's fine for you,—that's fine for you indeed, Danny! We can talk plain now; for" (as a reassuring snore came from her dozing neighbor) "thank

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God, she's off asleep! It's the grand thing for you to be going with mates like that. It's what I'm praying for as I sit here sad and lonely, Dan, that God will give ye His blessing, and help ye up, up, up, high as mortal man can go."

"And you with me, Aunt Win," said Dan, who, seated on the footstool of the chair, was smoothing her wrinkled hand.

"Ah, no, my lad, I don't ask that! I'm not asking that at all, Danny. I'll not be houlding to ye, and dragging ye down while ye're climbing. And whisper, lad, while there's no one listening: it's naither wise nor best for ye to be coming here."

"Why not?" asked Dan, for he knew that he was the light of poor Aunt Win's eyes and the joy of her old heart.

"Because—because," faltered Aunt Winnie, "though it's fibs I've been telling about yer grandeur and greatness—God forgive me that same!—the old busybodies around will be wondering and prating about why ye lave me here, Dan,—because I might be a shame to ye before all the fine gentlemen's sons that have taken ye up,—because" (Aunt Win's voice broke entirely).

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"a poor old woman like me will only hurt and hinder ye, Dan."

"Hurt and hinder me!" echoed Dan, who, with all his cleverness, could not understand the depths and heights of good old Aunt Winnie's love.

"Aye, lad, hurt and hinder ye; for ye're on the way up, and I'll not be the one to hould ye back. I do be dreaming grand dreams of ye, Danny lad,—dreams that I don't dare to spake out."

"Whisper them, then, Aunt Win," urged Dan, softly. "Maybe I'll make them come true."

"Ye couldn't," said the old woman, her dim eyes shining. "Only God in heaven can do that. For I dream that I see you on His altar, the brightest place that mortal man can reach. I'll ne'er live to see that dream come true, Danny; but I believe it would make my old heart leap if I was under the sod itself."

"O Aunt Win, Aunt Win!" Dan lifted the wrinkled hand to his lips. "That is a great dream, sure enough. Sometimes, Aunt Win, I—I dream it myself. But, then, a rough-and-tumble fellow like me, always getting into scrapes, soon wakes

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up. But one thing is sure: you can't shake me, Aunt Win. Dreaming or waking, I'll stick to you forever."

"Ah, no, lad,—no!" said the old woman, tremulously. "I'd not have ye bother with me. Sure it's the fine place I have here, with my warm room and nice bed, and the good Little Sisters to care for me, and the chapel close to hand. But I miss our own little place, sure, sometimes, Danny dear! I miss the pot of flowers on the window (it's against the rule to grow flowers here), and me own little blue tea-pot on the stove, and Tabby curled up on the mat before the fire."

Aunt Winnie broke down and sobbed outright, while Danny was conscious of a lump in his throat that held him dumb.

"Poor Tabby!" continued Aunt Winnie. "I hope the Mulligans are good to her, Dan. D'ye ever see her as ye pass their gate?"

"I do," answered Dan. "Molly Mulligan has tied a blue ribbon around her neck, and she is the pride of the house."

"And she has forgotten me, of course!" sighed Aunt Winnie. "But what could I expect of a cat!"

"Forgotten you? Not a bit! Molly says

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she steals into your room upstairs and cries for you every night."

"Ah, it was the sore parting for us all, God help us!" said Aunt Winnie, brokenly.

"But as long as it brings you luck, lad, I'll never complain. This is the holy place to die in, and what could a poor ould woman ask more?"

"A lot—a lot more!" burst forth Danny, passionately. "You should have a place to live and be happy in, Aunt Win. You should have your own fire and your own teapot, and your own cat in your own home; and I mean to get it back for you just as quick as I can."

"Whisht! whisht!" said Aunt Win, nervously, as the old lady nearby roused up, startled from her nap.

"It's time ye were going, Danny; for ye're a long way from college, and I wouldn't keep ye against rules. I hope ye'll have a fine time at the seashore, with the fishing and boating and all the other grand sports. Good-bye and God bless ye, lad, until we meet again! Good-bye. Danny dear!" And, realizing from the wide-open eyes of the old lady near him that all confidential communications were

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over, Dan kissed Aunt Win's withered cheek, and, his heart swelling with feelings he could not speak, took his way back to Saint Andrew's, all his dreams, hopes, ambitions for the future strangely shaken.

Aunt Win,—gentle, loving, heartsick, homesick Aunt Win! Aunt Win, with her soft, low, trembling voice begging him to give her up lest she should hurt and hinder him in his opening way! Aunt Win sighing for the little place she had called home, even while she was ready to give it up forever and die silent and lonely, that her boy might climb to heights of which she could only dream and never see! Dear, faithful, true-hearted, self-forgetting Aunt Win! Dan felt his own eyes blurring as he thought of all she had done, of all she was ready to sacrifice.

And—and—the other thought followed swiftly: he could give it all back to her,—the little attic rooms over Mulligans', the flowerpot in the window, the blue teapot on the stove, Tabby on the hearth-rug,—he could give it all back to Aunt Win and bring her home. It would be long, long years before the higher paths into which he had turned would yield even

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humble living; but the old ways were open to him still: the "ditch-digging" with which Dud Fielding had taunted him, the meat wagon, the sausage shop, that he had been considering only a few hours ago. What right had he to leave the good old woman, who had mothered him, lonely and heartsick that he might climb beyond her reach? And yet—yet to give up Saint Andrew's, with all that it meant to him; to give up all his hopes, his dreams; to turn his back on those wide corridors and book-lined rooms for counter and cleaver; to give up,—to give up! Quite dizzy with his contending thoughts, Dan was striding on his way when a hearty voice hailed him:

"Hello! That you, Dan? Jump in and I'll give you a lift." And Pete Patterson's ruddy face looked out from the white-topped wagon at the curb. "I was just thinking of you," said Pete, as Dan willingly sprang up to the seat at his side; for Pete had been a friendly creditor in the days of the little attic home when credit was sometimes sorely needed. "Are you in with the 'high brows' for good and all?"

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"I—I don't know," hesitated Dan.

"Because if you're not," continued Pete—"and what tarnation use a sturdy chap like you will find in all that Latin and Greek stuff I can't see,—if you're not in for it, I can give you a chance."

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V.—A “CHANCE.”

“I CAN give you a chance,” repeated Pete, as he turned to Dan with his broad, ruddy face illumined by a friendly smile. “It’s a chance I wouldn’t hold out to everybody, but I know you for a wide-awake youngster, as honest as you are slick. Them two don’t go together in general; but it’s the combination I’m looking fur just now, and you seem to have it. I was thinking over it this very morning. ‘Lord, lord,’ sez I to myself, ‘if Dan Dolan hadn’t gone and got that eddycation bug in his head, wouldn’t this be the chance for him?’”

“What is it?” asked Dan; but there was not much eagerness in his question. Wide and springy as was the butcher’s cart, it did not appeal to him as a chariot of fortune just now. A loin of beef dangled over his head, a dead calf was stretched out on the straw behind him. Pete’s white apron was stained with blood. Dan was conscious of a dull, sick repulsion of body and soul.

“Well, it’s this,” continued Pete, cheer-

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fully. "You see, I've made a little money over there at my corner, and I'm planning to spread out,—do things bigger and broader. There ain't no sort of use in holding back to hams and shoulders when ye can buy yer hogs on the hoof. That's what I'm in fur now,—hogs on the hoof; cut 'em, corn 'em, smoke 'em, salt 'em, souse 'em, grind 'em into sausage meat and head-cheese and scrapple, boil 'em into lard. Why, a hog is a regular gold mine when he is handled right. But I can't handle it in that little corner shop I've got now: there's no room fur it. But it's too good a business there fur me to give up. So I'm going to open another place further out, and keep both a-going. And I can't afford no high-class bookkeeper or clerk, that will maybe jump my trade and gobble all my profits. What I want is a boy,—a bright, wide-awake boy that knows enough about figguring to keep my accounts, and see that no one 'does' me,—a boy that I can send round in the wagon to buy and sell 'cording to my orders,—a boy that will be smart enough to pick up the whole business from *a* to *izzard*, and work up as I worked up till I kin make

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him partner. That's the chance I've got, and I believe you're the boy to take it."

"I—I would have to give up college of course," said Dan, slowly.

"Give up college!" echoed Pete. "Well, I should rather say you would! There ain't no time fur books in a biz like mine. Now, Dan, what's the good of college anyhow fur a chap like you? It ain't ez if you were one of these high mug-a-mugs with a rich father to pay yer way through, and set you up in a white choker and swallow-tail coat afterwards. What's the good of a strong, husky fellow fooling along with Latin and Greek, that will never be no use to him? You'd a heap better spiel plain strong English that will bring you in the spondulics. Why, look at me! I never had two years' schooling in my life. It's all I can do to scrawl 'P. J. Patterson,' so folks can read it, and thump out the rest on a second-hand typewriter. But that 'ere same scrawl will bring five thousand dollars out of the bank any time I want it. If I had as much eddycation as you have, Dan, nobody couldn't keep me in any school in the land

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another minute. It's dead waste of time and money."

"What would you pay me?" asked Dan, as the big loin of beef above joggled against his shoulder.

"Well, let me see!" considered Pete. "I ain't paying any fancy price at start, fur I don't know how things will work out; but I won't be mean with you, Dan. What do you say to four dollars a week and board?"

"No," answered Dan, promptly. "I don't want your board at all."

"Ye don't?" said Pete in surprise. "It will be good board, Dan: no fancy fixings but filling, I promise you that,—good and filling."

"I don't care how filling it is," answered Dan, gruffly. "I'd want my own board, with Aunt Winnie. That's all I'd come to you for,—to take care of Aunt Winnie."

"Ain't they good to her where she is?" asked Pete, who knew something of the family history.

"Yes," answered Dan; "but she is not happy: she is homesick, and I want to bring her—home."

And something in the tone of the

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boyish voice told Pete that, with Aunt Winnie and a home, Dan would be secured as his faithful henchman forever.

"I don't blame you," he said. "I've got an old mother myself, and if I took her out of her little cubby-hole of a house and put her in the marble halls that folks sing about, she'd be pining. It's women nature, specially old women. Can't tear 'em up by the roots when they're past sixty. And that old aunt of yours has been good to you sure,—good as a mother."

"Yes," answered Dan, a little huskily, "good as a mother."

"Then you oughtn't to go back on her sure," said Pete, reflectively. "Considering the old lady, I'll make it five dollars a week, if you'll agree for a year ahead, Dan."

"A year ahead!" echoed Dan, thinking of all that year had promised him.

"Yes," said Pete, decidedly. "It must be a year ahead. I can't break you in at such a big figger, and then hev you bolt the track just as I've got used to you. I wouldn't give five dollars a week to any other boy in the world, though I know lots of 'em would jump at it. It's only thinking of that old mother of mine and how I'd

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feel in your place, makes me offer it to you. Five dollars a week will bring your Aunt Winnie back home. And, between you and me, Dan, if she ain't brought back, she'll be in another sort of home before long, and past your helping. Mrs. Mulligan was telling me the other day that she had been out to see her, and she was looking mighty peaked and feeble,—not complaining of course, but just pining away natural."

"When will you want me?" blurted out Dan, desperately. "Right off now?"

"Oh, no, no!" was the hasty answer. "I haven't got the other place open yet, and this 'ere hot weather ain't no time fur it. I'm just laying my plans for the fall. What were you thinking of doing this summer?"

"Going off with a lot of fellows to the seashore. But I'm ready to give it up," answered Dan, gulping down the lump that rose in his throat.

"No, don't,—don't!" said Pete. "I haven't got things fixed for a start yet. Won't have them fixed for a couple of months or so. I ain't a-hurrying you. Just you think this 'ere chance over, and

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make up your mind whether it ain't wuth more than all that Greek and Latin they're stuffing into your head at Saint Andrew's. And then come around somewhere about the first of September and see me 'bout it. I won't go back on my offer. It will be five dollars cash down every Saturday night, and no renigging. I turn off here," concluded Pete, drawing up as they reached a busy corner. "You'll have to jump down; so bye, bye, Dan my boy, until I see you again! Remember it's five dollars a week, and a home for Aunt Winnie."

"I'll remember," said Dan, as, half dazed, he jumped from the wagon and took his way back to Saint Andrew's.

He entered the cross-crowned gateway that guarded the spacious grounds, feeling like one in a troubled dream. He could shape nothing clearly: his past, present, and future seemed shaken out of place like the vari-colored figures of a kaleidoscope. To give up all his hopes, to shut out the beautiful vista opening before him and settle down forever to—to—"hogs on the hoof!" And yet it was his only chance to cheer, to gladden, perhaps to save gentle

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Aunt Win's life,—to bring her home again.

But would she be happy at such a sacrifice? Would she not grieve even at the fireside she had regained over her broken dreams? And Dan would come down from his dreams and visions (which, after all, are vague and uncertain things for boys of thirteen) to Tabby and the teapot, to the fluttering old hand in his clasp, the trembling old voice in his ear.

The sun was close to its setting; supper was over, he knew; and Jim Norris was waiting impatiently for his promised game. But he could not think of tennis just now; still less was he disposed for a meeting with Dud Fielding, whose voice he could hear beyond the box hedge at his right. So, turning away from tennis court and playground, Dan plunged into the quiet shelter of the walk that skirted the high, ivy-grown wall, and was already growing dim with evening shadows, though lances of sunlight glinting here and there through the arching pines broke the gloom.

Pacing the quiet way with feeble step was an old priest, saying his Office. Father Mack's earthly work was done. He could no longer preach or teach; he was only

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lingering in the friendly shadows of Saint Andrew's, waiting his Master's call home; his long, busy life ending in a sweet twilight peace. Sometimes at retreats or on great feasts, when there was a crowd of juvenile penitents in the college chapel, Father Mack, gentle and indulgent, had his place in a quiet corner, where he was rather avoided by young sinners as a "dying saint."

But Dan, whatever might be his month's record of wrong-doing, had taken to Father Mack from the first. Perhaps it was something in the Irish voice that recalled Aunt Winnie; perhaps some deeper sympathy between souls akin. Though they seldom met, for the old priest had his room in a building remote from the students' quarters, Father Mack and Dan were fast friends. His presence here was most unlooked for; and Dan was about to retire without further intrusion, when the old priest closed his book and turned to him with a kindly nod.

"You need not run off. I'm done, my boy. These long, hot days are a bit hard on me; but I like to stay out here in the evening to say my Office and watch the

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sunset. Did you ever watch the sunset, Danny?"

"Yes, Father," answered Dan. "It's great."

"What do you see in it, Danny?" was the low question.

"Oh, all sorts of things, Father,—domes and spires and banners of gold and red and purple, and pillars of cloud and fire—"

"And gates," broke in Father Mack. "Don't you see the gates, Danny,—gates that seem to open in the shining way that leads to God's Throne? Ah, it's a wonderful sight, the sunset, when your day is near done and you are tired and old,—too old to be picturing and dreaming. I'll soon see—beyond the cloud and the dream, Danny,—I'll soon see."

The old man paused for a moment, his dim eye kindling, his withered face rapt. Then suddenly, as if recalled from some cloudy height to earth, his look and voice changed into fatherly interest.

"Were you looking for me,—were you wanting to talk to me, my son?"

"No—yes—no," faltered Dan, who had not thought of such a thing. "Well, yes, I believe I do. I'm all muddled up, and

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maybe you can set me right, Father Mack. For—for,” Dan blurted out without further hesitation, “I can’t see things clear myself. Aunt Winnie is grieving and pining and homesick at the Little Sisters. She is trying to hide it, but she is grieving, I know. She broke down and cried to-day when I went to see her,—cried real sobs and tears. And—and” Dan went on with breathless haste, “Peter Patterson, that keeps the meatshop at our old corner, has offered me five dollars a week to come and work for him. To give up Saint Andrew’s—and—and—all it means, Father Mack, and work for him.”

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VI.—FATHER MACK.

"GIVE up Saint Andrew's!" repeated Father Mack in a low, startled voice. "You, Dan! Give up! Oh, no, my boy,—no!"

"Aunt Winnie will die if I don't" blurted out Dan, despairingly. "Pete Patterson says so. And I can take her home and give her back her little rooms over Mulligans', and the blue teapot and Tabby, and everything she loves. And Pete says I can work up to be his partner."

"His partner,—his partner! In what?" asked Father Mack, anxiously.

"Meat business," answered Dan. "He's made money, and he's going in for it big,—corning, smoking, sausage, everything. I—I could take care of Aunt Winnie fine."

"Meat business, sausage? I don't think I understand," said Father Mack, in bewilderment. "Sit down here, Dan, and tell me all this over again."

Dan took his seat on a broken slab that had been a gravestone before the old college cemetery had been condemned

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and removed beyond the limits of the growing city. It was a very old slab, bearing the Latin title of some Brother or Father who had died fifty years ago. The sunset fell through a gap in the pines that showed the western sky, with its open gates, their pillars of cloud and fire all aglow.

"Tell me slowly, calmly, Dan. My ears are growing dull."

And Dan told his story again, more clearly and less impetuously; while Father Mack listened, his bent head haloed by the setting sun.

"I can't let Aunt Winnie die," concluded Dan. "You see, I have to think of Aunt Winnie, Father."

"Yes, I see,—I see, my boy," was the low answer. "And it is only of Aunt Winnie you are thinking, Dan?"

"Only of Aunt Winnie," replied Dan, emphatically. "You don't suppose anything else would count against Saint Andrew's, Father. I'd work, I'd starve, I'd die, I believe, rather than give up my chance here?"

"Yes, yes, it's hard lines sometimes," said Father Mack. "You may find it

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even harder as the years go by, Dan. I heard about the trouble yesterday."

"Oh, did you, Father?" said Dan, somewhat abashed. "Dud Fielding did stir the old Nick in me for sure."

"Yes," said Father Mack. "And that same fierce spirit will be stirred again and again, Dan. Despite all your teachers can do for you, there will be pricks and goads we can not help."

"I know it," answered Dan, sturdily. "I'm ready for them. Saint Andrew's is worth all the pricks and goads I'll get. But Aunt Winnie, Father,—I can't forget Aunt Winnie. I've got to take Aunt Winnie back home."

"Would she—wish it, at such—such a cost, Dan?" Father Mack questioned.

"Cost." repeated Dan! simply. "It wouldn't cost much. The rooms are only a dollar a week, and Aunt Winnie can make stirabout and Irish stews and potato cake to beat any cook I know. Three dollars a week would feed us fine. And there would be a dollar to spare. And she could have her teapot on the stove again, and Tabby on the hearth-rug, only—only" (the young face clouded a little) "I'm

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afraid, great as it all would be, she'd be grieving about her dreams."

"Her dreams!" echoed Father Mack, a little puzzled.

"Yes," said Dan. "You see, I am all she has in the world, and she is awful soft on me, and since I got into Saint Andrew's she's softer still. She thinks there's nothing too great or grand for me to do. My, it would make you laugh, Father, to hear poor old Aunt Winnie's pipe dreams about a tough chap like me!"

"What does she dream, Dan?" asked the old priest softly.

"I suppose she'd get out of them if she were home where things are natural like," said Dan; "but now she sits up there in the Little Sisters' dreaming that I'm going to be a priest,—a rough-and-tumble fellow like me!"

"Stranger things than that have happened, Dan," said Father Mack, quietly. "I was a rough-and-tumble fellow myself."

"You, Father!" exclaimed Dan.

"The 'roughest-and-tumblest' kind," said Father Mack, his worn face brightening into a smile that took away twenty years at least. "I ran away to sea, Dan,

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leaving a gentle mother to break her heart for me. When I came back" (the old face shadowed again) "she was gone. Ah, God's ways are full of mystery, Dan! I think it was that made me a priest."

Father Mack was silent for a moment. His dim eyes turned to the sunset, where the cloud curtains were swept asunder, the pillared gates a glory of crimson and gold. Something in his old friend's face hushed Dan's questioning until Father Mack spoke again.

"That was a long time ago,—a long time ago. But the thought of it makes me understand about Aunt Winnie, Dan, and how hard it is to give you up. Still—still—even of old God asked the firstlings of the flock. Sacrifice! sacrifice! It is the way to heaven, Dan. Heart, hopes, tears, blood,—always sacrifice." And again the old speaker paused as if in troubled thought. "How soon must you make your choice, Dan?" he asked at length.

"My choice? About leaving, you mean, Father? Oh, Pete Patterson doesn't want me until fall. And I haven't any place to go this summer, if I give up now. Father Regan is going to send us off to—

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morrow with Brother Bart for a summer at the seashore."

"A summer at the seashore! Ah, good, good,—very good!" said Father Mack, his old face brightening. "That will give us time to think, to pray, Dan. A summer! Ah, God can work wonders for those who trust Him in a summer, Dan! Think what He does with the seed, the grain, the fruit. It is not well to move or to choose hastily when we are in the dark as to God's will. So say nothing about all this to any one as yet, Dan,—nothing this summer."

"I won't, Father," agreed Dan.

"And I promise that every day you will be remembered in my Mass, Dan."

"Thank you, Father! That ought to keep me out of trouble sure."

"And now where is this seashore place?" asked Father Mack, quite cheerfully.

"An island called Killykinick, Father."

"Killykinick?" echoed Father Mack, startled. "You are going to Killykinick? God bless me, how wonderful!"

"You know the place, Father?" asked Dan, with interest.

"I know it indeed," was the answer. "I

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was wrecked there in the wild days of which I told you, Dan, sixty years ago. The 'Maria Teresa' (I was on a Portuguese ship) went upon the rocks on a dark winter night, that I thought was likely to be my last. For the first time in my reckless youth I really prayed. My dear mother, no doubt, was praying for me, too; for I learned afterwards that it was on that night she died, offering with her last breath her life for her boy. Well, we held together somehow until morning, and got off to the shore of Killykinick before the 'Maria Teresa' went down, loaded with the golden profits of a two years' cruise."

"And did they never get her up?" asked Dan, quite breathless with interest at this glimpse of a "dying saint's" past.

"Never," answered Father Mack,—
"at least never that I heard of. It was soon afterwards that I turned into other ways and lost sight of my old mates. But I always have remembered the friendly haven of Killykinick. It was a wild place,—only a few deserted fishermen's huts on the rocky shore, where we lived on fish and clams until taken off by a

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passing ship. But that same rocky shore meant safety, shelter, life. And so in the after years I have always blessed Killykinick. And you are going there to-morrow! You will find it all changed,—all changed, I am sure,” said Father Mack, as he slowly rose to his feet, for the sunset was fading now. “But I will think of you there, Dan,—think of you frolicking over the rocks and sands where I wandered so long ago a shipwrecked boy. Now it is time for me to go in, for my old blood chills in the twilight; so I must say good-bye,—good-bye and God bless you, my boy!”

And, laying his hand for a moment on the boyish head, the old priest turned away into the deepening shadows of the pines, leaving Dan, who was beginning to feel vividly conscious that he had missed his supper, to make a rapid foray into the refectory, where Brother James could always be beguiled into furnishing bread and jam in and out of time,—having been, as he assured the belated ones, a boy himself.

There was another belated one this evening. Seated before a tempting spread

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of milk toast, demanded by his recent convalescence, was Freddy Neville, a little pale and peaked perhaps, but doing full justice to a third creamy slice, and ready for more.

"Why, hello, Fred!" greeted Dan, dropping into the chair beside him. "You down?"

"Yes," said Fred, spooning his dish vigorously. "I'm well, all right now. Temperature gone, Brother Tim says. Can't I have a little more toast, Brother James, please? I'm not half filled up yet. Supper tastes twice as good down here. I've been out with Brother Bart buying shoes and things to go to Killykinick, and I'm hungry as a bear."

"Wait a bit then, and I'll bring ye both in some strawberry jam and biscuits," said Brother James, good-humoredly. "It's the black fast Brother Tim puts on sick boys, I know. When they came down after the measles I couldn't get them enough to eat for a month. There now!" And the good man set forth supplies liberally. "I know what it is. I've been a hungry boy myself."

"Jing, it's good to be up and out again!"

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said Freddy, as both boys pitched into biscuits and jam. "I felt down and out this morning sure, Dan, and now everything is working fine. We're going to have the time of our lives this summer, after all. Even Dud Fielding is cooling off, Jim Norris says, now that his nose has gone down, and he has heard about Killykinick."

"Who told him?" asked Dan, who did not feel particularly cheered at these tidings; for Dud's "cooling off" was by no means to be trusted, as he knew.

"Father Regan, of course. He couldn't send the boys unless they wanted to go. But when they heard about the old house uncle made out of his ship, and the rowboats and the sailboat, and the bathing and fishing, they just jumped at the chance to go. And Jim says there is a fine place not far off, where Dud spent the season two years ago with some tip toppers, and he's counting on getting in with them again. So he is tickled all around. But I'm not caring about Dud or what he likes, so long as I've got you, Dan. I wouldn't want to go without you."

"Wouldn't you, kid?" asked Dan, softly; for, after all the troubles and perplexities

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of the day, his little chum's trusting friendship seemed very sweet to him.

"No-o-o!" answered Freddy, most decidedly. "But I sort of wish Brother Bart was not going. He'll keep me such a baby!"

"No, he won't. I'll see to that," said Dan, with a twinkle in his eye. "If there's any way of giving you a good time, I'll do it. And I won't let you get hurt again either,—no sir! I've had my scare about that. I'm going to look out for you right. It may be for the last time, but—"

"The last time," interrupted Freddy quickly. "Why will it be the last time?"

"I mean I may never have a chance at such a jolly holiday again," answered Dan, suddenly remembering his promise to Father Mack. "But we'll make this one a hummer. If Killykinick is half what I think it is, we'll make this chance a hummer you'll never forget."

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VII.—A HOLIDAY START.

AND the holiday proved to be a "hummer" from the very start. Everybody was in high spirits. Even Dud Fielding, with his nose happily reduced to its normal color and size, had lost his "grouch," and was quite himself again, in a sporting suit of English tweed, ordered from his tailors for "roughing it." Easy-going Jim was in comfortable khaki; so was little Fred; while Dan had been privately presented by the Brother ward-robman with two suits of the same,—“left by boys for the poor,” good Brother Francis had whispered confidentially.

“I fill the bill then, sure,” said Dan, with a cheerful grin.

“You do, but many a fine man has done the same before you,” answered Brother Francis, nodding. “I’ve put a few more things in your trunk, Dan; take them and God bless you! I’ve cut off the marks so nobody’ll be the wiser.”

Brother Bart’s wrinkled face wore a glow of pleasurable excitement as, after seeing

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the baggage off, he marshalled his holiday force on the college porch for the last words of command from his reverend chief.

"Give your orders now, Father; though God knows how I'll be able to keep this lot up to them. They are not to be killing and drowning themselves against my will and word."

"Certainly not," said Father Regan, with a smile. "Brother Bart is to be obeyed boys, or you'll promptly be ordered home."

"And there is to be no roving off wid pirates and smugglers that may be doing their devilment along the shore," continued Brother Bart, anxiously.

"The government looks out for all that now," laughed Father Regan.

"I'm not so sure," said Brother Bart, who had grown up in a wild stretch of the Irish coast. "It's a wicked world, and we're going beyant the Lord's light that shines on us here."

"Not at all," was the cheering assurance. "Beach Cliff is only six miles away, and it has a little church where there is a Mass every Sunday."

"The Lord be praised for that anyhow!"

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said the good man, with a sigh of relief. "It's a great burthen that ye've put on my body and soul, Father. But I'll do me best, and, with God's help, I'll bring the four of them back safe and sound to ye. Now give us your blessing and we'll be off."

And very soon they were off indeed, speeding on to the busy wharf, scene of many a "lark" in Dan's boyish past. Here the great steamboat was awaiting them; for, although the route was longer and more circuitous, Father Regan had decided it best for his young travellers to make their journey by sea.

To Jim and Dud such a trip was no novelty; even Freddy had taken more than one holiday outing with Uncle Tom; but to Dan—Dan whose busy, workaday childhood had excluded even the delights of a cheap excursion—everything was wonderfully and deliciously new. He felt like one in a bewildering dream. As the great floating palace, all aglitter and aglow with splendors of paint and upholstery hitherto unknown, swung from her moorings out into the stream, Dan quite forgot the gentility of his surroundings and the elegant Dud Fielding at his

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elbow, and waved his hat with a wild "Hurrah" to half a dozen Wharf Rats who were fishing off the pier.

"Dan Dolan!" rose the shrill-voiced chorus, and six pairs of bare legs dangling over the water scrambled up to a stand. "Jing! if it ain't Dan Dolan,—Dan Dolan all diked up like a swell! Hi-yi-yi-yi, Dan! Where are you going, Dan?"

"Seashore, New England, Killykinick!" Dan shouted back, quite unconscious of the smiles and stares of the passengers. "Off for the summer! Hooray!"

"Hooray—hooray!" with a series of whoops and catcalls came back the Wharf Rats' farewells, echoing with such friendly memories of a rough past that Dan was struck speechless by the fierce contrasting voice in his ear.

"You darned dunderhead!" whispered Dud Fielding. "Can't you keep quiet in a decent crowd?"

"Eh?" said Dan in bewilderment.

"Don't you see everybody staring at us?" continued Dud, wrathfully. "To be shouting at dirty little beggars like those and disgracing us all!"

"Disgracing you?" echoed Dan.

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"Yes," said Dud, still hot with pride and rage. "And there are the Fosters on the upper deck,—people I know. Come, Jim, let's cut off before they see us with this low-down chump."

And Dud led easy-going Jim to the other side of the boat.

"Low-down chump!" Unconscious as he was of any offence, Dan felt the scornful sting of the words, and his hot blood began to boil; but he remembered the "pricks and goads" he had resolved to bear bravely, and shut his lips tight together as Freddy stole a small hand into his own.

With the last "Hi-yi" the Wharf Rats had settled back to their occupation, and Freddy eyed them from the growing distance most favorably.

"Did you ever fish like that, Dan?" he asked with interest.

"Often," was the brief reply; for Dan was still hot and sore.

"Golly, it must be fun! And did you catch anything, Dan?"

"My dinner," answered Dan, grimly.

"Jing!" exclaimed Freddy, breathlessly. "That was great! When we get to Killykinick let us go out like those bare-

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legged boys and catch our dinner, too.”

And Dan laughed and forgot he was a “low-down chump” as he agreed they would catch dinners whenever possible. Then he and Freddy proceeded to explore the big boat high and low, decks, cabins, saloons, machinery wherever visible. Freddy, who had made similar explorations with Uncle Tom as guide, was quite posted in steamboat workings; but it was all new and wonderful to Dan, who had only dry book-knowledge of levers and cogs and wheels; and to watch them in action, to gaze down into the fiery depths of the furnace, to hear the mighty throb of the giant engine,—to see all these fierce forces mastered by rules and laws into the benignant power that was bearing him so gently over summer seas, held him breathless with interest and delight. Even the clang of the first dinner gong could not distract him from his study of cylinder and piston and shaft and driving-rod, and all shining mechanism working without pause or jar at man’s command.

“Just as if they had sense,” said Dan, thoughtfully,—“a heap more sense than lots of living folk I know.”

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"That's what Uncle Tom says," replied Freddy, to whom, in their brief holidays together, Uncle Tom, cheery and loving, was an authority beyond question. "He says they work by strict law and rule, and people won't. They shirk and kick. Jing! if these here engines took to shirking and kicking where would we be? But they don't shirk and kick against law. Uncle Tom says they obey, and that's what boys ought to do—obey. Gee! it's good we're not engines, isn't it, Dan? We'd blow things sky high.—Here's the second call for dinner," said Freddy, roused from these serious reflections by the sound of the gong. "We'd better move quick, Dan, or the ice-cream may give out."

"Can you have ice-cream,—all you want?" asked Dan.

"Well, no," hesitated Freddy, who knew what Dan could do in that line,—“not like we have at college. They dish it out other places a little skimp, but they'll give you a good supply of other things to make up.”

Which information Dan soon found to be most pleasantly correct; and, though the glories of the long dining room, with its corps of low-voiced waiters, were at

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first a trifle embarrassing, and Brother Bart's grace, loudly defying all human respect, attracted some attention to his table, the boys did full justice to the good things set so deftly before them, and went through the bill of fare most successfully.

The black waiters grinned as the young travellers proceeded to top off with apple pie and ice-cream, combined in such generous proportions that Brother Bart warned them that the sin of gluttony would be on their souls if they ate another mouthful.

Then Freddy, sorely against his will, was borne off by his good old friend to rest, according to Brother Tim's last order; while Dan was left to himself to watch the boat turning into the shore, where a wharf loaded with truck for shipping jutted out into the stream; and one passenger—a sturdy, grizzled man in rough, brown hunting corduroy—leaped aboard followed by two fine dogs. Then the laboring engines, with puff and shriek, kept on their way; while Dan continued his investigations, and made friendly overtures to a big deck hand who volunteered to show the eager young questioner “below.”

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And "below" they went, down steep, crooked steps that led away from all the glitter and splendor above, into black depths, lit only by fierce glow of undying fires. Brawny, half-naked figures fed and stirred the roaring flames; the huge boilers hissed, the engines panted; but through all the darkness and discord came the measured beat of the ship's pulse that told there was no shirk or kick,—that all this mighty mechanism was "obeying."

And then, this dark sight-seeing over, Dan came up again into the bright, sunlit deck crowded with gay passengers chatting and laughing. Brother Bart was making efforts at conversation with an old French priest returning to his mission in the Canadian forests; Dud had introduced Jim to his fashionable friends, and both boys were enjoying a box of chocolates with pretty little Minnie Foster; Freddy was still "resting" in his stateroom.

All were unmindful of the dark, fiery depths below, where fierce powers were working so obediently to bear them on their happy, sunlit way, that was widening each moment now. The smiling shores, dotted with farms and villages, were.

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stretching away into hazy distance; there was a new swell in the waves as they felt the heart-beat of the sea. It was all new and wonderful to Dan; and he stood leaning on the deck rail of a secluded corner made by a projecting cabin, watching the sunset glory pale over the swift vanishing shore, when he was suddenly startled by a deep voice near him that questioned:

“Worth seeing, isn’t it?”

Dan looked up and saw the big grizzled stranger in corduroy gazing at the splendor of the western sky.

“Yes, sir,” answered Dan. “It’s great! Are we out at sea now?”

“Almost,” was the reply. “Not in the full swell yet, but this is our last sight of land.” He nodded to a promontory where the delicate lines of a lighthouse were faintly pencilled against the sunset.

“Jing!” said Dan, drawing a long breath. “It feels queer to be leaving earth and sun and everything behind us.”

His companion laughed a little harshly. “I suppose it does at your age,” he said. “Afterwards” (he stopped to light a cigar and puff it into glow),—“afterwards we get used to it.”

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"Of course," assented Dan, "because we know we are coming back."

"Coming back!" repeated the other slowly. "We are not always sure of that. Sometimes we leave the land, the light, behind us forever."

"Oh, not forever!" said Dan. "We would have to strike light and land somewhere unless we drowned."

"We don't drown," continued the stranger. "We do worse: we drift,—drift in darkness and night."

Dan stared. His companion had taken his cigar from his lips and was letting its glow die into ashes.

"Folks do drown sometimes," said Dan. "I tell you if you go round the bottom of this boat you'd see how we could drown mighty easily. Just a wheel or a crank or a valve a mite wrong,—whew! we'd all be done for. But they don't go wrong; that's the wonder of it, isn't it?" said Dan, cheerfully. "If everybody kept steady and straight as a steam-engine, this would be a mighty good world."

"No doubt it would," was the reply. "Are you not rather young to be facing it alone?"

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“Oh, I’m not alone!” said Dan, hastily. “I’m off with a lot of other fellows for the seashore. We are college boys from Saint Andrew’s.”

“Saint Andrew’s?” The stranger started so violently that the dying cigar dropped from his hold. “Saint Andrew’s College, you say, boy! Not Saint Andrew’s in—”

But a clear young voice broke in upon the excited question.

“Dan Dolan! Where are you, Dan? Oh, I’ve been looking everywhere for you!”

And, fresh and rosy from his long rest, Freddy Neville bounded out gleefully to Dan’s side.

A low cry burst from the stranger’s lips, and he stood staring at the boys as if turned into stone.

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VIII.—A NEW FRIEND.

“JING, you gave me a scare, Dan!” said Freddy, drawing a long breath of relief. “I thought you had dropped overboard.”

“Overboard!” scoffed Dan. “You must think I’m a ninny. And you have been sleeping sure! Got to keep this sort of thing up all summer?”

“Oh, no, no!” said Freddy: “only for a few days,—until I get real well and strong; though Brother Bart will keep fussing over me, I know. Golly, I wish we had Uncle Tom along with us!”

“All right, is he?” asked Dan.

“Great!” replied Freddy, emphatically. “Doesn’t baby you a bit; lets you row and swim and dive when you go off with him. Most as good as a real father.”

“*Just* as good, I guess,” amended Dan.

“No,” said Freddy, shaking his head. “You see, he has other work—preaching and saying Mass and giving missions—where I don’t come in. He has to leave me at Saint Andrew’s because he hasn’t any home. It must be just fine to have a

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home that isn't a school,—a sort of cosy little place, with cushioned chairs, and curtains, and a fire that you can see, and a kitchen where you can roast nuts and apples and smell gingerbread baking, and a big dog that would be your very own. But you can't have a home like that when you have only a priest uncle like mine."

"No, you can't," agreed Dan, his thoughts turning to Aunt Winnie and her blue tea-pot, and the little rooms that, despite all the pinch and poverty, she had made home.

"And Christmas," went on Freddy (both young speakers being quite oblivious of the big stranger who had seated himself on a camp stool in the shelter of the projecting cabin, and, with his folded arms resting on the deck rail, was apparently studying the distant horizon),—"I'd like to have one real right Christmas before I get too big for it."

"Seems to me you have a pretty good time as it is," remarked Dan: "new skates and sled, and five dollars pocket money. There wasn't a fellow at the school of your age had any more."

"That's so," said Freddy; "but they

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went *home*. A fellow doesn't want pocket money when he goes home. Dick Fenton had only sixty cents; I lent him fifteen more to get a card-case for his mother. But he had Christmas all right, you bet: a tree that went to the ceiling (he helped to cut it down himself); all the house 'woody' with wreaths and berries and fires,—real fires where you could pop corn and roast apples. He lives in the country, you see, where money doesn't count; for you can't buy a real Christmas; it has to be homemade," said Freddy, with a little sigh. "So I'll never have one, I know."

Then the great gong sounded again to announce supper; and both boys bounded away to find the rest of their crowd, leaving the big stranger still seated in the gathering darkness, looking out to sea. As the boyish footsteps died into silence, he bowed his head upon his hands, and his breast heaved with a long, shuddering breath as if some dull, slumbering pain had wakened into life again. Then, in fierce self-mastery, he rose, stretched his tall form to its full height, and, ascending to the upper deck, began to pace its dimming length with the stern, swift tread of one

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whose life is a restless, joyless march through a desert land.

Meanwhile Brother Bart and his boys had begun to feel the roll of the sea, and to realize that supper had been a mistake. Jim and Dud had retired to their state-rooms, with unpleasant memories of Minnie Foster's chocolates, and the firm conviction that they never wanted to see a candy box again. Brother Bart was ministering to a very white-faced "laddie," and thanking Heaven he was in the state of grace and prepared for the worst.

"The Lord's will be done, but I don't think any of us will live to see the morning. There must have been some poison in the food, to take us all suddint like this."

"Oh, no, Brother Bart!" gasped Freddy, faintly. "I've been this way before. We're all just—just—seasick, Brother Bart—dead seasick."

Even Dan had a few qualms,—just enough to send him, with the sturdy sense of his rough kind, out into the widest sweep of briny air within his reach. He made for a flight of stairs that led up into some swaying, starlit region where there were no other sufferers, and flung himself

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upon a pile of life-preservers that served as a pillow for his dizzy head. Sickness of any sort was altogether new to Dan, and he felt it would be some relief to groan out his present misery unheard. But the glow of a cigar, whose owner was pacing the deck, suddenly glimmered above his head, and the big man in corduroy nearly stumbled over him.

"Hallo!" he said. "Down and out, my boy? Here, take a swig of this!" and he handed out a silver-mounted flask.

"No," said Dan, faintly,—*"can't. I've taken the pledge."*

"Pooh! Don't be a fool, boy, when you're sick!"

"Wouldn't touch it if I were dying," said Dan. "I'm getting better now, anyhow. My, but I felt queer for a while! It is so hot and stuffy below. No more packing in on a shelf for me. I'll stick it out here until morning."

"And the others,—the little chap who was with you?" the stranger asked hastily. "Is he—he sick, too?"

"Freddy Neville? Yes, dead sick; but Brother Bart is looking out for him. Brother Bart is a regular old softy about

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Freddy. He took him when he was a little kid and keeps babying him yet."

"He is good to him, you mean?" asked the other, eagerly.

"Good? Well, I suppose you'd call it good. I couldn't stand any such fussing. Why, when Fred got a tumble in the gym the other day the old man almost had a fit!"

"A tumble,—a fall? Did it hurt him much?" There was a strange sharpness in the questioner's voice.

"Pooh, no!" said Dan. "Just knocked him out a little. But we were all getting into trouble at Saint Andrew's, for vacation there is pretty slow; so Father Regan has sent us off to the seashore for the summer."

"The seashore? Where?"

"Some queer place called Killykinick," answered Dan, who was now able to sit up and be sociable.

"Killykinick?" repeated his companion, in a startled tone. "Did you say you were going to Killykinick?"

"Yes," answered Dan. "Freddy's uncle or cousin or somebody died a while ago and left him a place there. Freddy has a lot of houses and money and things

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all his own. It's lucky he has. He isn't the kind to rough it and tough it for himself. Not that he hasn't plenty of grit," went on Freddy's chum, hastily. "He's as plucky a little chap as I ever saw. But he's been used to having life soft and easy. He is the 'big bug' sort. (I ain't.) So I'm glad he has money enough to make things smooth at the start, though his no-'count father did skip off and leave him when he was only five years old."

"His father left him?" repeated Dan's companion. "Why?"

"Don't know," answered Dan. "Just naturally a 'quitter,' I guess. Lots of menfolks are. Want a free foot and no bother. But to shake a nice little chap like Freddy I call a dirty, mean trick, don't you?"

"There might be reasons," was the hesitating rejoinder.

"What reasons?" asked Dan, gruffly. "There ain't any sort of reason why a father shouldn't stick to his job. I hate a 'quitter,' anyhow," concluded Dan, decisively.

"Wait until you are twenty years older

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before you say that, my boy!" was the answer. "Perhaps then you will know what quitting costs and means. But you're an odd chum for that little boy. I saw him with you down below. How is it that you're such friends?"

And then Dan, being of a communicative nature, and seeing no cause for reserve, told his new acquaintance all about the scholarship that had introduced him into spheres of birth and breeding to which he frankly confessed he could make no claim.

"I'm not Freddy's sort, I know; but he took to me somehow,—I can't tell why."

Yet as Dan went on with his simple, honest story, his listener, who, world-wise and world-weary as he was, knew something of the boyish nature that turns instinctively to what is strong and true and good, felt he could tell why Freddy took to this rough diamond of a chum.

Dan, in his turn, learned that his new acquaintance was called John Wirt; that he was off on a vacation trip, hunting and fishing wherever there was promise of good sport; that he had travelled abroad for several years,—had been to China, Japan, India, Egypt; had hunted lions and

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elephants, seen the midnight sun, crossed Siberian steppes and African deserts. From a geographical standpoint, Mr. Wirt's story seemed an open and extensive map, but biographically it was a blank. Of his personal history, past, present or future, he said nothing. Altogether, Dan and his new acquaintance had a pleasant hour on the open deck beneath the stars, and made friends rapidly.

"I wish you were going our way," said Dan, regretfully, as his companion announced that he was to get off at the first point they touched. "Brother Bart is going to granny us all, I know. If we had a real strong man like you around, he wouldn't scare so easily. And there is fine fishing about Killykinick, they say."

"So I have heard." The stranger had risen now, and stood, a tall shadow dimly outlined above Dan. "I—I—perhaps I'll drop in upon you. Isn't it time for you to turn in now?"

"No," answered Dan,—“not into that packing box below. I'm up here for the night.”

"And I'm off before morning, so it's good-bye and good luck to you!"

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And, with a friendly nod, Mr. John Wirt strode away down the darkened deck, leaving Dan to fling himself back upon his life-preservers, and wonder how, when, or where he had seen their new acquaintance before,—not at Saint Andrew's; for Mr. Wirt had been abroad, as he had said, ever since Dan entered the college; not at Milligans' or Pete Patterson's; or anywhere about his old home. Perhaps he had blacked his shoes or sold him a newspaper in some half-forgotten past; for surely there was something in his tone, his glance, his friendly smile that Dan knew.

He felt quite well now. All the dizziness and nausea had vanished, and he was his own strong, sturdy self again. The roll and sway of the boat were only the rock of a giant cradle; the surge of the sea, a deep-toned lullaby soothing him to pleasant dreams; and the sky! Dan had never seen such a midnight sky. He lay, with his head pillowed in his clasped hands, looking up at the starry splendor above him with a wonder akin to awe. The great, blue vault arching above him blazed with light from a myriad stars, that his books had told him were worlds greater than this on whose

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wide waters he was tossing now,—worlds whose history the wisest of men could never know,—worlds, thousands and millions of them, moving in shining order by “rule and law.”

“Rule and law,”—it was the lesson that seemed to face Dan everywhere,—down in those black depths he had penetrated to-day, where valve and lever and gauge held roaring fire and hissing steam, with all their fierce force, to submission and service; in the polished mechanism whose steady throb he could feel pulsing beneath him like a giant heart; in the radiant sky where worlds beyond worlds swept on their mysterious way—“obeying.”

With half-formed thoughts like these stirring vaguely in his mind, Dan was dropping off into pleasant sleep, when he was roused by the sound of voices and the glimmering of a ship's lantern.

“I think you will find your boy here, sir.”

It was Mr. John Wirt, who, with the aid of a friendly deck hand, was guiding a pale, tottering, very sick Brother Bart to Dan's side.

“Who wants me?” asked the half-wakened Dan, springing to his feet.

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“Dan Dolan! Ye young rascal!” burst out Brother Bart, almost sobbing in his relief. “It’s down at the bottom of the black sea I thought ye were. I’ve been tramping this boat, with this good man houlding me up (for I’m too sick to stand), this half hour. Down wid ye now below stairs with the rest, where I can keep me eye on ye. Come down, I say!”

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IX.—OBEYING ORDERS.

“DOWN below!” the words struck harshly on Dan’s ear; for good old Brother Bart was more used to obedience than command, and he was sick and shaken and doing his guardian duty under sore stress and strain to-night.

“Go below! What for?” asked Dan, shortly. “I’m all right up here, Brother Bart. I can’t stand being packed in downstairs.”

“Stand it or not, I’ll not lave ye up here,” said Brother Bart, resolutely. “Down with ye, Dan Dolan! Ye were put under my orders, and ye’ll have to mind my words.”

“Not when it means being sick as a dog all night,” answered Dan, rebelliously. “I tell you I can’t stand it down in that stuffy place below, and I won’t. I am going to stay up here.”

“And is that the way ye talk?” said Brother Bart, who had a spirit of his own. “And it’s only what I might look for, ye graceless young reprobate! God

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knows it was sore against my will that I brought ye with me, Dan Dolan; for I knew ye'd be a sore trial first to last. But I had to obey them that are above me. Stay, then, if you will against my word; for it's all I have to hold ye, since ye are beyant any rule or law.—We'll go back, my man," continued Brother Bart to the burly deck hand who had been supporting his swaying form. "Help me to get down to my bed, in God's name; for I am that sick I can scarcely see."

And Brother Bart tottered away, leaving Dan standing hot and defiant by his new friend, Mr. Wirt.

"Sorry to have made trouble for you," said that gentleman; "but when I found that good old man wandering sick and distracted over the boat, stirring up everyone in search of a lost boy, there was nothing to do but give him the tip."

"Freddy may stand it," said Dan, fiercely; "but I won't be grannied. What harm is there in staying up here?"

"None at all from our standpoint," was the reply; "but the good old gentleman looks at things in another light. You're under his orders," he said; and there was

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a faint, mocking note in the words, that Dan was keen enough to hear. He was hearing other things too,—the pant of the engines, the throb of the pulsing mechanism that was bearing him on through darkness lit only by the radiance of those sweeping worlds above; but that mocking note in his new friend's voice rose over all.

“Orders!” he repeated angrily. “I bet *you* wouldn't take any such orders if you were a boy.”

“No, I wouldn't, and I didn't” (there was a slight change in the speaker's voice as he paused to light a cigar), “and you see where it left me.”

“Where?” asked Dan, curiously.

“Adrift,” was the answer,—“like this big boat would be if there was no one to command: beyond rule and law, as that good old friend of yours said just now,—beyond rule and law.”

“Beyond rule and law,—rule and law.” The words began to hammer somehow on Dan's head and heart as he recalled with waking remorse poor Brother Bart tottering away in the darkness,—Brother Bart, who, as Dan knew, was only doing his duty

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faithfully, to the boy under his care,—
Brother Bart, who, like the steamboat,
like the stars, was *obeying*.

For a moment or two Mr. Wirt puffed
at his cigar silently, while the fierce fire
that had blazed up in Dan's breast sank
into bounds; mastered by the boy's better
self, even as he had seen Nature's fierce
forces of flame and steam mastered by
higher powers to-day.

"In short," said Mr. Wirt at last, as
if he had been having thoughts of his
own, "I am a derelict, my boy."

"What's that?" asked Dan, who had
never heard the word before.

"A ship adrift, abandoned by captain
and crew,—a wreck that tosses on the
sea, a peril to all that come near it. There
is nothing a good sailor dreads more than
a derelict, and he makes it his business to
sink it promptly whenever he can."

"Couldn't he tow it into port?" asked
Dan, with interest.

"Not worth the trouble," was the grim
answer.

"Jing!" said Dan. "I'd try it, sure."

"Would you?" asked Mr. Wirt.

"Yes," replied Dan, decidedly. "If a

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ship can float, it must be worth something. I'd try to fling a hawser about it somewhere, and haul it in and dry-dock it to find out what was wrong. I've seen an oyster boat, that was leaking at every seam, calked and patched and painted to be good as new."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Wirt, with a short laugh; "but the oyster boats don't go very far a-sea, and derelicts drift beyond hope or help. I am that kind, and if—if" (the speaker hesitated for a moment),—"if I had a boy like you, I wouldn't take any chances with him: I'd keep him off my decks; I'd put him on a sound ship with a wise captain and a steady crew, and he should be under orders until—well, until he had learned to sail midnight seas like this by the light of the stars." And, tossing his half-smoked cigar into the water, Mr. Wirt turned abruptly away without any further "good-night."

"He's a queer one," said Dan to himself, as he stared after the tall figure disappearing in the darkness. "I don't know what he means by his drifting and derelicts, but I guess it's a sort of talk about breaking laws and rules like I am doing up here

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to-night. Gee! but Brother Bart is an old granny, stirring up all this fuss about nothing; and I'll be dead sick, I know. But I'm under orders" (Dan stretched his arms over his head, and, drawing a long, reluctant sigh, took a last look at the stars), "and I guess I'll have to go."

And he went, making his way with some difficulty over the swaying decks and down steep stairs where the footing was more perilous than the heights of Old Top; through long stretches of gorgeous saloons whence all the life and gayety had departed; for, despite the stars, the sea was rough to-night, and old Neptune under a friendly smile was doing his worst.

Jim and Dud, sturdy fellows that they were, had somewhat recovered their equilibrium and were dozing fitfully; but little Freddy was still white and wretched; and poor Brother Bart, all the ruddy glow gone from his face, lay with his hands clasping his Rosary, very sick indeed.

"Say your prayers as well as ye can, laddie," he moaned to that small sufferer. "The Lord be merciful to us both if we're not to see the morning light!—Ah, are ye back, Dan Dolan?" as his eyes fell

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upon the wandering sheep of his flock standing beside him. "May God forgive ye for this night's work! It was the looking for ye that killed me entirely."

"O Brother Bart, no, you're not as bad as that!" said Dan, remorsefully; "but I'm down here now to take care of you and Freddy, and you see if I don't do it right."

And Dan, who in the old days of Tabby and the blue teapot had watched with and waited on Aunt Winnie through many a night of pain, proved as good as his word. It was as close and hot and stuffy as he had foreseen; the big boat plunged and rolled so that it was hard to keep his footing; at times he himself grew so sick that he could scarcely steady his helping hand, but he never gave up his job. He bathed poor Brother Bart's aching head with all a woman's tenderness; bandaged Freddy's throbbing temples with the cold compress that sent him off to sleep; made dizzy forays into unknown domestic departments for cracked ice and soda water; shocked Brother Bart out of what he believed his last agony by reporting everyone on the boat in "the same fix."

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“We’ll be in smooth water, the men say, by morning; and then you’ll be all right, Brother Bart. Let me bathe your head some more, and try to go to sleep.”

And when at last Brother Bart did fall asleep in the grey glimmer of the early dawn, it was a very pale, shaking, dizzy Dan that crept out on the open deck beyond the staterooms for a breath of fresh air. He could not have climbed to forbidden heights now even if he would. But they were in smooth waters, and the boat was pushing on to a sandy point, where a branch railroad came down to the shore. A dozen or more passengers were preparing to land; among them was Mr. Wirt, with a gun slung to his shoulder, a knapsack on his back, and his two great tawny dogs pulling in their leashes impatiently,—all evidently ready for a summer in the wilds.

Dan felt too weak and sick for conversation until Mr. Wirt’s eye fell upon the pale, trembling boy, who, with head bared to the morning breeze, was clinging weakly to an awning post.

“Why, hello, my lad!” said the gentleman. “What’s the matter. I thought you

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were all right when I saw you last up above."

"I was," answered Dan, grimly. "But I came down, and, jing! I've had a night of it, with Brother Bart and Freddy both dead sick on my hands."

"And you nursed them all night?" (There was an odd tremor in the speaker's voice.) "Are they better this morning?"

"Yes," answered Dan. "They are all right now, sleeping like tops; but they had a tough time. It was lucky I gave up and came down to look after them."

"So you obeyed orders, after all. And now you're all broken up yourself?" said the gentleman, compassionately.

"Pooh, no!" was the sturdy answer. "I don't break up so easily. I'll be all right, too, in a little while,—after I've had more of this fresh air. Going to get off here?—" as the boat pushed up to the wharf.

"Yes," said Mr. Wirt. "I'm off to the woods for a few weeks; but—but maybe you will see me again later. Meanwhile what did the little fellow call you?"

"Dan,—my name is Dan Dolan," was the answer.

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"Then good-bye, Dan!" Mr. Wirt's shapely hand closed over the boy's in a strong pressure. "You've given me a lesson, Dan,—the first I've learned for many a year. I won't forget you." And he was off with his dogs across the gangway to the shore just flushing with the morning light.

The worst was over; and Dan, worn out with his night of watching, was glad to creep into his "packing box" of a stateroom, and, flinging himself in his berth, dropped off to sleep,—a sleep full of strange dreams. They were wild and troubled dreams at first. He was down in black depths where, stripped to the waist, he was working amid roaring fires and hissing steam; he was out on a dark wide ocean, striving to fling a rope to a wreck drifting helplessly amid thundering breakers; he was up on a wind-swept deck, with Brother Bart's shaking grasp dragging him down below. Then suddenly the picture changed: it was not Brother Bart but old Father Mack whose trembling hand was upon his arm, guiding him through the leafy shadows of the college walk where they had last talked together.

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Beyond and above them was the dazzling glory of the stars, those sweeping worlds on which the young dreamer had looked last night. But as he walked on now, the leafy shadows seemed to grow into arched and pillared aisles rising far, far above him, and the stars were but the countless tapers on a mighty altar reaching to heights he could not see; and Aunt Winnie was kneeling on the step,—old Aunt Winnie, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes. Then the guiding hand seemed to tighten on his arm, and it was Brother Bart again beside him,—Brother Bart, his sturdy, ruddy self again, shaking him awake.

“I hate to rouse ye, Danny lad” (there was a new friendliness in the old man’s tone), “for it was the long, hard night ye had with us; but we’re to get off here. Praise be to God, our killing journey is nearly done!”

And Dan stumbled out hurriedly to the deck, to find the boat pushing into the harbor of a quaint old town, whose roofs and spires were glittering in the noonday sunshine. Pretty sailboats were flitting hither and thither on sunny wings; the

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white stretch of beach was gay with bathers; the full notes of an orchestra came from the band stand on the jutting pier.

"Jing!" exclaimed Dan, in amazement at such a festive scene. "Is this Killykinick?"

"No," was Dud Fielding's surly answer. "I wish it was. But I mean to cut over here to the Fosters whenever I can. This is Beach Cliff, where we have to take a sailboat to Killykinick. And," Dud went on, with deepening disgust, "I bet it's that old tub that is signalling to us now."

Dan's eyes, following Dud's sullen gaze, saw, among the gaily painted pleasure craft moored at the wharfs, a clumsy little boat with rusty sides and dingy sail. An old man stood in the stern waving a tattered flag that, caught out by the breeze, showed in large faded letters—Killykinick.

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X.—ON THE “SARY ANN.”

“It’s the sign,” said Brother Bart gratefully, as he caught sight of the fluttering pennant. “He was to wave the flag to us so we would know the boat. Keep together now, boys,” continued their anxious guardian, who was a little bewildered by a rush and struggle to which he was not accustomed. “Ah, God help them that have to push their way in a world like this! Hold to my hand, laddie, or ye’ll be tramped down. Straight behind me now, the rest of ye, so ye won’t be lost.”

And, marshalling his boyish force, Brother Bart pressed on through the hurrying throngs that surged over gangway (for it was the height of the holiday season) until he reached the shabby little boat whose occupant was a very old man with a face brown and wrinkled as tanned leather. A long scar across his cheek had twisted his mouth into a crooked smile. He spat a large quid of tobacco into the water, and greeted his passengers with an old sea dog’s growl:

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“Been waitin’ more than an hour for ye, but that consarned boat ain’t never on time! Hit some pretty rough weather, I reckon, out at sea?”

“We did,” answered Brother Bart, with feeling. “It’s the mercy of God we’re alive to tell the tale. In with ye, boys, and sit steady. Take the middle of the boat, laddie, and hold to Dan. Give me a hand to help me in; for I’m weak and shaking yet. The Lord’s will be done, but I never thought to be sailing the seas in a cockleshell like this,” added the good man, as the boat rocked under his sturdy weight when he sank heavily into his place.

“I say so, too. Let’s hire something better,” replied Dud Fielding, eagerly.

“Thar ain’t nothing better or safer than this here ‘Sary Ann’ along the shore,” said the boat’s master, grimly. “I sot every timber in her myself. She ain’t got a crack or a creak in her. I keeled her and calked her, and I’ll lay her agin any of them painted and gilded play-toys to weather the toughest gale on this here coast. You’re as safe in the ‘Sary Ann,’ Padre, as if you were in church saying your prayers.”

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"I'm no Padre," disclaimed Brother Bart, hastily. "I'm only an humble lay-brother, my good man, that has come to take care of these boys."

"Brother or Father, it's all the same to me," was the gruff answer. "I'm a hard-shell Baptist myself, but I've only good feelings to your kind. My old captain was one of you, and never a better man walked the deck. Now, duck, my lads, while I swing out the sail and we'll be off."

The passengers ducked their heads hurriedly while the 'Sary Ann's' boom swung around. Her tawny sail caught the wind, and she was off with a light, swift grace that her looks belied.

"Golly, she can clip it!" exclaimed Jim Norris, who had a home on the Chesapeake and knew all about a boat. "What sort of a rig is she, anyhow?"

"Mixed like good terbacker," briefly answered the owner, as he leaned back comfortably at the helm and bit off another chew. "Sloop, skiff, outrigger, lugger,—she's got the good points of all and none of their kicks. Not that she ain't got a spirit of her own. Every boat worth anything hez. 'Thar's days when she takes the

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wind and thar's no holdin' her. You jest have to let her spread her wings to it and go. But, Lord, let that same wind begin to growl and mutter, let them waves begin to cap and swell, and the 'Sary Ann' is ready for them, you bet. She will drop all her fun and frolic, and scud along brave and bare agin the wildest gale that ever lashed a coast. And them young bloods over yon laugh at her," continued the "Sary Ann's" owner, glowering at the gay buildings of the fashionable "boat club" they were just now passing. "They call her the 'Corsair,' which is no Christian name to give an honest boat."

"You're right," said Brother Bart: "and, though you haven't the true faith, you seem to be a Christian yourself. What is your name, my good man?"

"Jeroboam Jimson," was the answer. "Leastways that was what I was christened, my mother going in heavy for Scripture names. I had a twin brother Nebuchanezzar. Sort of mouth-filling for general use, so we was naturally shortened down to Neb and Jeb. Most folks call me Jeb yet."

"It comes easier," said Brother Bart;

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“though I’d never think of giving it to a man of your years. It seems a pity, with the Litany of the Saints convenient, to have to go back so far for a name. But that is no fault of yours, as God knows. Have you been living long in this place we are going to?”

“More than five and forty years,” was the answer,—“since the ‘Lady Jane’ struck the rocks off Killykinick, November 27, 1865. I was second mate to old Captain Kane; and I stood by him until last May, when he took the cruise that every man has to make by himself. And I’m standing by his ship ’cording to orders yet. ‘Blood is thicker than water, mate, he says to me; ‘I’ve got to leave all that I have to little Polly Raynor’s boy, but you’re to stick to the ship as long as you live. I’ve hed that put down in the log with my name to it, and priest and lawyer and doctor as witness. You’re Captain Jeroboam Jimson of the “Lady Jane,” in my place, and thar ain’t no land sharks nor water sharks can bother ye.’ I lay that’s the chap he called Polly’s boy,” said Captain Jeb, turning his eyes on Freddy, who, seated at Brother Bart’s side, had been listening, with flatter-

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ing interest, to the old sailor's conversation.

"Yes," he spoke up eagerly, "my mother was Polly. Did you know her?"

"I did," said Captain Jeb, nodding. "She came down here once as a bit of a girl, dancing over the sands like a water kelpie. The old Captain didn't care much for women folks, but he was sot on her sure. Then she come down agin as a bride, purty and shy and sweet; but the old man warn't so pleased then,—growled he didn't know what girls wanted to get married for, nohow. So you're her boy!" The old man's eyes softened as they rested on Freddy. "You've got a sort of look of her, though you ain't as pretty,—not nigh."

Meantime the "Sary Ann," her tawny sail swelling in the wind, had left the gay beach and bathers and boat club of Beach Cliff, and was making out into the wide blue open, taking the swell of the waves like a sea bird on the wing.

"Easy now, lass!" cautioned Captain Jeb, as they neared a white line of breakers, and he stood up firm and strong at the helm. "Steady, all of you youngers; for we're crossing the bar. Many a good ship has left her bones on this same reef. Easy,

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‘Sary Ann’! It’s no place for fooling round here.”

And, as if to emphasize his words, the black shadow of a wrecked ship rose gaunt and grim before them.

“Struck the reef two months ago,” explained the Captain, with eye and hand still steady on his helm. “Can’t get her off. Captain fool enough to try Beach Cliff Harbor without a native pilot! Why, thar ain’t no books nor charts can tell you nothing ’bout navigating round these here islands: you have to larn it yourself. It’s the deceivingest stretch along the whole Atlantic coast. Thar’s times when this here bar, that is biling deep with water now, is bare enough for one of you chaps to walk across without wetting your knees. Easy now, ‘Sary Ann’! Ketch hold of that rope, younker, and steady the sail a bit. So thar, we’re over the shoals. Now clip it, my lass” (and the old man swung the sail free),—“clip it fast as you like for Killykinick.”

And, almost as if she could hear, the “Sary Ann” leaped forward with the bulging sail, and was off at the word; while Captain Jeb, the harbor reef safely passed,

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leaned back in his boat and pointed out to his young passengers (for even the elegant Dud was roused into eager curiosity) the various things of interest on their way: the light ship, the lighthouses, the fishing fleet stretching dim and hazy on the far horizon, the great ocean liner only a faint shadow trailing a cloud of smoke in the blue distance.

"Them big fellows give us the go by now, though time was when they used to come from far and near: all kinds—Spanish, Portugee, East Indian. Them was the whaling days, when Beach Cliff was one of the greatest places on the coast. She stands out so far she hed the first bite at things. All the sailing ships made for snug harbor here. But, betwixt the steamboats and the railroads gobbling up everything, and the earth itself taking to spouting oil, things are pretty dead and gone here now."

"But lots of fine folks come in the summer time," said Dud.

"And there's a church!" exclaimed Brother Bart, who had caught a passing glimpse of a cross-crowned spire. "Thank God we'll not be beyond the light and truth entirely! You're to take us to Mass

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every Sunday, my good man; and we are to give you a dollar for the trouble of it, to say nothing of the blessing upon your own soul. Were you ever at Mass?"

"Never," answered Captain Jeb.

"Ah, God help you, poor man!" said Brother Bart. "Sure we never know our own blessings till we talk with them that's left in the darkness. But it's not too late for the grace of Heaven to reach you yet. Never been to Mass! Well, well, well!" Brother Bart shook his head, and, as if unable to cope with such hopeless religious dearth, relapsed into silence.

"Is it much further to Killykinick?" asked Dan, who, with shining eyes had been taking in all this novel experience. "Looks like we're heading out to nowhere."

The "Sary Ann," with the wind full in her sail, seemed bearing off into sunlit distance, where sky and sea met. There was a faint, shadowy line to the left; and just beyond, a dim pencil point pierced the cloudless blue.

"That's a lighthouse, isn't it?" asked Jim, who had a sailor's eye.

"Yes," growled Captain Jeb, his leathery face darkening. "Why they wanted to

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set up that consarned thing just across from Killykinick, I don't know. Hedn't we been showing a light thar for nigh onto fifty years? But some of these know-alls come along and said it wasn't the right kind; it oughter blink. And they made the old captain pull down the light that he had been burning steady and true, and the Government sot up that thar newfangled thing a flashing by clockwork on Numskull Nob. It did make the old man hot, sure. 'Shet the window, mate,' he said to me when he was dying and wanted air badly. 'I can't go off in peace with that devilish thing on Numskull Nob a winking at me.' Duck agin, all hands! 'Sary Ann' swings around here. 'Thar's Killykinick to starboard!'"

And all hands "ducked" as rope and canvas rattled under Captain Jeb's guiding hand; and the "Sary Ann" swept from her dancing course to the boundless blue towards the shadowy line and dim pencil point now growing into graceful lighthouse and rocky shore. Numskull Nob, jutting up from a hidden reef, over which a line of white-capped breakers was booming thunderously, seemed to justify the presence

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of the modern light that warned off closer approach to the island; for the stretch of water that lay between was a treacherous shoal where many a good ship had stranded in years gone by, when Killykinick was only a jagged ledge of rock where the sea birds nested and man had no place. But things had changed now. A rude but sturdy breakwater made a miniature harbor in which several small boats floated at their moorings; a whitewashed wharf jutted out into the waves; the stretch of rocky shore beyond had been roughly terraced into easy approach.

“Easy now, boys, — easy!” warned Brother Bart anxiously, as the “Sary Ann” grated against her home pier, and Captain Jeroboam proceeded to make fast. “Don’t be leaping off till you know the way.”

But Brother Bart might have called to the dashing waves. This Killykinick was very different from the desert they had expected; and, with shouts of delight from Jim, Dud and Dan, even little Freddy sprang ashore. Shrubs and trees of strange growth nodded and waved amid the rocks; here and there in sheltered crannies were

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beds of blooming flowers; and in the lee of a towering rock that kept off the fury of storm and wind stood the very queerest house the young explorers had ever seen.

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XI.—AT KILLYKINICK.

It was a ship,—a ship with its keel settled deep in the sand, and held immovable against wind and storm by a rudely built foundation wall of broken rock. The sunlight blinked cheerfully from the dozen portholes; the jutting prow bore the weather-worn figurehead of the “Lady Jane,”—minus a nose and arm, it is true, but holding her post bravely still. Stout canvas, that could be pegged down or lifted into breezy shelter, roofed the deck, from which arose the “lookout,” a sort of light tower built around a mast that upheld a big ship lantern; while the Stars and Stripes floated in glory over all.

For a moment the four young travellers stared breathless at this remarkable edifice, while Freddy eagerly explained:

“It’s my Great-uncle Joe’s ship that was wrecked here on Killykinick. He had sailed in her for years and loved her, and he didn’t want to leave her to fall to pieces on the rocks; and so he got a lot of men, with chains and ropes and things, and

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moved her up here and made her into a house."

And a first-class house the "Lady Jane" made, as all the boys agreed when they proceeded to investigate Great-uncle Joe's legacy. True, there was a lack of modern conveniences. The sea lapping the sands to the right was the only bath-room, but what finer one could a boy ask? There was neither dining room nor kitchen; only the "galley," as Captain Jeb, who came up shortly to do the honors of this establishment, explained to his guests. The "galley" was a queer little narrow place in the stern, lined with pots and pans and dishes scoured to a shine, and presided over by another old man more crooked and leathery-visaged than Captain Jeb, and who seemed too deep in the concoction of some savory mixture simmering on his charcoal stove to give look or word to the newcomers who crowded around him.

"That is Neb," said his brother, in brief introduction. "He don't hev much to say, but you mustn't mind that. It ain't been altogether clear weather in his upper deck since he shipped with a durned pirate of a captain that laid his head open with a

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marline spike; but for a cook, he can't be beat by any steward afloat or ashore. Jest you wait till he doses out that clam-chowder he's making now!"

Then there was the long, low cabin that stretched the full length of the "Lady Jane," and that—with its four cosy bunks made up shipshape, its big table, its swinging lamp, its soft bulging chairs (for Great-uncle Joe had been a man of solid weight as well as worth)—was just the place for boys to disport themselves in without fear of doing damage. All about were most interesting things for curious young eyes to see and busy fingers to handle: telescope, compass, speaking trumpet, log and lead and line that had done duty in many a distant sea; spears, bows and arrowheads traded for on savage islands; Chinese ivories and lacquered boxes from Japan. A white bearskin and walrus tusk told of an early venture into the frozen North, when bold men were first drawn to its darkness and mystery; while Buddha from an Eastern temple, squatting shut-eyed on a shelf, roused good old Brother Bart into holy horror.

"I never thought to be under the same

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roof with a haythen idol. Put it away, my man,—put it out of sight while I'm in yer house; for I can't stand the looks of it. I'll be after smashing it into bits if ye lave it under me eyes."

And his indignation was appeased only by the sight of the Captain's room, which had been respectfully assigned to the "Padre," as Captain Jeb persisted in calling his older guest.

Here Great-uncle Joe had treasures rare indeed in the good Brother's eye: a wonderful crucifix of ivory and ebony; the silver altar lamp of an old Spanish monastery; a Madonna in dull tints that still bore traces of a master hand; a rosary, whose well-worn beads made Brother Bart's pious heart warm.

"Indeed he was a God-fearing man I'm sure, this uncle of laddie's."

"He was," agreed Captain Jeb; "a little rough-talking sometimes, but all sailors are."

"Well, it's a rough life," said Brother Bart, recalling his own late experience. "It's little chance it gives you to think or pray. But the old man ye talk of prayed; I am sure of that. The beads here bear token of it." [123]

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"Aye," answered Captain Jeb. "He held to them to the last as tight as if they was an anchor chain,—why I don't know."

"That's yer ignorance, poor man!" said Brother Bart, compassionately. "Ye should pray morning and evening for light, and perhaps ye'll be given the grace to know what the hould of blessed beads is to a dying hand. Now, if ye don't mind, I'll rest a bit in this quiet place, and try to say me own prayers that I missed last night; for it was a sore trying time to me, both body and soul. There's no harm can come to the boys, now that they are safe here."

"I wouldn't swear to four youngers like them anywhere," was the grim answer. "But ye can rest easy, Padre: I'll keep an eye on them, never fear." And, closing the old Captain's door on his anxious guest, Captain Jeb proceeded to "keep an eye" on the boys who were exploring Killykinick in every direction.

As it had little more than half a mile of visible surface, the exploration was naturally limited; but there was a "deal more below," as Captain Jeb assured

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them,—reefs and shoals stretching out in every direction, and widening every year with the silt carried down from the shore. There were one or two wide hollows between the rocks, where that same silt, top-dressed with richer earth imported from more favored spots by Captain Jeb, served as kitchen garden, in which beans, cabbages and potatoes made a promising show. On another sheltered slope, green with coarse grass, brown Betty was pasturing peacefully; while in a hen-house beyond there was clucking and cackling, cheerfully suggestive of chickens and eggs.

“We used to hev mostly ship rations,” said Captain Jeb. “But the old man got sort of picky and choosy these last years, and turned again the hard-tack and old hoss meat that had been good enough for him before. So I got a few boat-loads of good earth and took to growing things. And things do grow here for sure, if you only give them a chance. All they want is root hold; the sun and the air and the soft mists do the rest.”

Then there was the pump house; for even the toughest of old “salts” must

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have fresh water. And it had cost many a dollar to strike it in these rocks; but strike it at last the well-borers did, and the pump was roofed and walled in as Killykinick's greatest treasure.

"Stick round here, younkers, along by the 'Lady Jane' and the wharf and the garden beds, and down by the 'Sary Ann' and the boats to the south beach, and you'll be pretty safe. But I'm going to show you a place whar you can't do no monkey shining, for it ain't safe at all."

And as Captain Jeb spoke he turned to the high wall of rock that had backed and sheltered the "Lady Jane" for nearly fifty years; and, bending his thin form, he pushed through a low, narrow opening, with, it is needless to say, four wide-eyed boys scrambling breathlessly behind him,—Dan, as usual, in the lead, pulling Freddy on.

For a moment they stumbled in darkness, through which came a thunderous sound like the swell of some mighty organ under a master hand; and then they were out in light and space again, with the ocean cliff of Killykinick arching above and around them in a great cave hollowed

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by the beating waves out of solid rock. Wall and roof were rough and jagged, broken into points and ledges; but the floor was smoothed by the tide into a shining, glittering surface, that widened out to meet the line of breakers thundering white-foamed beyond, their sprays scattering in light showers far and near.

“Jing! Golly! Hooray!” burst from the young explorers; and they would have dashed off into bolder investigation of this new discovery, but Captain Jeb’s sudden trumpet tone withheld them.

“Stop,—stop thar, younkers! Didn’t I tell you this warn’t no play-place? How far and how deep these caves stretch only the Lord knows; for the sea is gnawing them deeper and wider every year. And thar’s holes and quicksands that would suck you down quicker than that whale in the Good Book swallowed Jonah. And more than that: in three hours from now these here rocks whar we are standing will be biling with high tide. This ain’t no play-place! I’m showing it to you so you’ll know; for thar ain’t no reefs and shoals to easy things here. It’s deep sea soundings that no line can reach, this

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nor' east shore. Them waves hev a clean sweep of three thousand miles before they break here. And thar ain't to be no ducking nor swimming nor monkey shining around here unless me or Neb is on watch. Neb ain't much good for navigating since he got that hit with the marline spike, but for a watch on ship or shore he is all right. So them 'orders' is all I hev to give; the Padre, being a bit nervous, may hev some of his own; but thar ain't nothing to hurt four strapping younkers round Killykinick except right *here*. And now, I reckon, it's about time for dinner. I'm ready for some of Neb's clam-chowder, I know; and I guess you are, too."

"Jing! but this is a great place of yours, Freddy!" said Dan, as they turned back to the ship house. "We could not have found a better."

"That's all you know," scoffed the lordly Dud. "I mean to keep on the right side of the old duffer," he added *sotto voce*, "and get over to Beach Cliff in that tub of his whenever I can. Minnie Foster asked me to come; they've taken a fine house down on the shore, and have all sorts of fun—dances, picnics, boat races. I'll get sick of

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things here pretty soon; won't you, Jim?"

"I don't know about that," was the lazy answer. "About as good a place to loaf as you'll find."

"Loaf?" put in Dan. "There isn't going to be any loafing at Killykinick for me. I'm for boating and fishing and clamming and digging up those garden beds. I don't know what those others are paying," said Dan, who had fallen behind with Captain Jeb; "but I've got no money, and am ready to earn my board and keep."

"You are?" said the Captain, in surprise. "As I took it, the Padre bunched you all together for as fair a figure as I could ask."

"Not me," replied Dan. "These other chaps are plutes, and can pay their own way; so cut me out of your figures and let we work for myself."

"Well, that's sort of curious talk for a younker with a high-class schooling," said Captain Jeb, dubiously. "You mean you want to hire out?"

"Yes," said Dan, remembering Aunt Winnie and how doubtful his claim was upon St. Andrew's.

"Thar will be considerable stirring

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round, I'll allow," was the reflective answer. "I was thinking of getting Billy Benson to lend a hand, but if you'd like the job of sort of second mate—"

"I would," said Dan. "What is a second mate's work?"

"Obeying orders," answered Captain Jeb, briefly.

"That's dead easy," said Dan, with a grin.

"Oh, is it?" was the grim rejoinder. "Jest you wait, younker, till you've stood on a toppling deck in the teeth of a nor'-easter, with some dunderhead of a captain roaring cuss words at you to cut away the mast that you know is all that's keeping you out of Davy Jones' Locker, and then you'll find what obeying orders means. But if you want the job here, it's yours. What will you take?"

"My board and keep," answered Dan.

"That ain't no sort of pay," said the other, gruffly.

"Wait till you see me eat," laughed Dan; "besides, I was never a second mate before. Maybe I won't make good at it."

"Mebbe you won't," said Captain Jeb, his mouth stretching into its crooked smile.

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“You’re ruther young for it, I must admit. Still, I like your grit and pluck, younker. Most chaps like you are ready to suck at anything in reach. What’s your name?”

“Dan—Dan Dolan,” was the answer.

“Good!” said Captain Jeb. “It’s a square, honest name. You’re shipped, Dan Dolan. I guess thar ain’t no need for signing papers. This little chap will bear witness. You’re shipped as second mate in the ‘Lady Jane’ now and here.”

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XII.—THE SECOND MATE.—A CONFAB.

THEN Neb's bell clanged out for dinner, that was served on the long table in the cabin, shipshape, but without any of the frills used on land. There was a deep earthen dish brimming with chowder, a wonderful concoction that only old salts like Neb can make. It had a bit of everything within Killykinick reach—clams and fish and pork and potatoes, onions and peppers and hard-tack,—all simmering together, piping hot, in a most appetizing way, even though it had to be “doused” out with a tin ladle into yellow bowls. There was plenty of good bread, thick and “filling”; a platter of bacon and greens, and a dish of rice curried after a fashion Neb had learned cruising in the China Sea. Last of all, and borne in triumphantly by the cook himself, was a big smoking “plum duff” with cream sauce. There is a base imitation of “duff” known to landsmen as batter pudding; but the real plum duff of shining golden yellow, stuffed full of plums like Jack Horner's pie, is all the sailor's own.

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Dan plunged at once into his new duties of second mate. Both Jeb and Neb were well past seventy, and, while still hale and hearty, were not so nimble as they had been forty years ago; so a second mate, with light feet and deft hands, proved most helpful, now that the "Lady Jane" had taken in a double crew.

Dan cleared the table and washed the dishes with a celerity bewildering to the slow brain dulled by the marline spike. He swabbed up the galley under Neb's gruff direction; he fed the chickens and milked the cow. For a brief space in two summers of his early life, Dan had been borne off by an Angel Guardian Society to its Fresh Air Home, a plain, old-fashioned farmhouse some miles from his native city; and, being a keen-eyed youngster even then, he had left swings and seesaws to less interested observers, and trudged around the fields, the hen-house, the dairies, the barns, watching the digging and the planting, the feeding and the milking; so that the ways of cows and chickens were not altogether beyond his ken.

"Sure and yer board and keep was to

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be paid for with the rest, lad," said Brother Bart, kindly.

"I don't want it paid, Brother," replied Dan. "St Andrew's does enough for me. I'd a heap rather work for myself out here."

"Whether that is decent spirit or sinful pride I'm not scholar enough to tell," said the good Brother in perplexity. "It takes a wise man sometimes to know the differ; but I'm thinking" (and there was a friendly gleam in the old man's eyes) "if I was a strapping lad like you, I would feel the same. So work your own way if you will, Danny lad, and God bless you at it!"

Even heartier was the well-wishing of Captain Jeb after his first day's experience with his second officer.

"You're all right, matie!" he said, slapping Dan on the shoulder. "There will be no loafing on your watch, I kin see. You're the clipper build I like. Them others ain't made to stand rough weather; but as I take it, you're a sort of Mother Carey chicken that's been nested in the storm. And I don't think you'll care to be boxed up below with them fair-weather chaps. Suppose, being second mate, you

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swing a hammock up on the deck with Jeb and me?"

"Jing! I'd like that first-rate," was the delighted answer.

And, as Brother Bart had no fear of danger on the "Lady Jane," Dan entered on all the privileges of his position. While Freddy and Dud and Jim took possession of the sheltered cabin, and the dignity of the Padre (so it seemed to Captain Jeb) demanded the state and privacy of the Captain's room, Dan swung his hammock up on deck, where it swayed delightfully in the wind, while the stout awnings close-reefed in fair weather gave full view of the sea and the stars.

He slept like a child cradled in its mother's arms, and was up betimes to plunge into a stretch of sheltered waves, still rosy with the sunrise, for a morning bath such as no porcelain tub could offer; and then to start off with old Neb, who, like other wise householders, began the day's work early. Neb might be deaf and dull, and, in boyish parlance, a trifle "dippy"; but he knew the ways of fish, from whales to minnows. He had a boat of his own, with its nets and seines and

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lines, that not even the sturdy old Captain in the days of his command dared touch.

That Dan was allowed to handle the oars this first morning proved that the second mate had already established himself firmly in Neb's favor. But, as Wharf Rat, Dan had gained some knowledge of boats and oars; and he was able to do his part under the old salt's gruff direction. They went far out beyond shoal and reef; beyond Numskull Nob (whose light was still blinking faintly in the glow of the sunrise), into deep waters, where the fishing fleet could be seen already at work in the blue distance hauling up big catches of cod, halibut, and other game.

"That ain't fishing!" growled old Neb. "It's durned mean killing."

"And isn't all fishing killing?" asked Dan, as they flung out their own lines.

"No," said Neb. "When you cast a line, or a harpoon even, you give critters a chance; but them durned pirates thar don't give a fish no chance at all."

"Did you ever cast a harpoon?" asked Dan, with interest.

For a moment the dull eyes kindled, the dull face brightened, as some deadened

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memory seemed to stir and waken into life; then the shadow fell heavy and hopeless again.

"Mebbe I did, sonny; I don't know. It's so far back I've most forgot."

But old Neb's wits worked in their own way still. It took less than an hour to catch dinners for the whole Killykinick crew; and the fishermen came home to find that Captain Jeb had been doing duty during their absence, and breakfast was ready on the long table in the cabin,—a breakfast such as none of the white-coated waiters in their late journey could beat.

Captain Jeb knew nothing of cereals, but he had a big bowl of mush and a pitcher of golden cream; he had bacon and eggs frizzled to a charm; he had corndodgers and coffee that filled the air with fragrance,—such coffee as old sailors look for about break of day after a middle watch. Altogether, the crew of the "Lady Jane" found things very pleasant, and the first week at Killykinick had all the interest of life in a newly discovered land. Even Brother Bart was argued by the two old salts out of his "narvousness,"

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and laddie was allowed to boat and fish and swim in safe waters under Dan's care; while Jim and Dud looked out for themselves, as such big fellows should.

"'Thar's nothing to hurt them off thar," said Captain Jeb, as Brother Bart watched his navigators with anxious eyes pushing out over a stretch of dancing waves. "'Twixt here and Numskull Nob you could 'most walk ashore. Jest keep them out of the Devil's Jaw, that's all."

"'The Lord between us and harm!" ejaculated Brother Bart, in pious horror. "Where is that at all?"

"'The stretch of rock yonder," replied Captain Jeb, nodding to the northeast.

"And isn't that an awful name to give to a Christian shore?" asked Brother Bart.

"No worse than them ar suck-holes of waves deserves," was the grim answer. "When the high tide sweeps in thar, it kerries everything with it, and them caves guzzle it all down, nobody knows whar."

"Ah, God save us!" said Brother Bart. "It's the quare place to choose aither for life or death. I wonder at the laddie's uncle, and ye too, for staying all these years. Wouldn't it be better now, at

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yer time of life, for ye to be saving yer soul in quiet and peace, away from the winds and the storms and the roaring seas that are beating around ye here?"

"No," was the gruff answer,—“no, Padre. I couldn't live away from the winds and the storms and the waves. I couldn't die away from them neither. I'd be like a deep sea-fish washed clean ashore. How them landlubbers live with everything dead and dull around them, I don't see. I ain't been out of sight of deep water since I shipped as cabin boy in the 'Lady Jane' nigh onto sixty years ago. I've been aloft in her rigging with the sea beating over her deck and the wind whistling so loud ye couldn't hear the cuss words the old man was a-roaring through his trumpet below. I've held her wheel through many a black night when no mortal man could tell shore from sea. I stood by her when she struck on this here reef, ripped open from stem to stern; and I'm standing by her now, 'cording to the old Captain's orders, yet."

"Ye may be right," said Brother Bart, reflectively. "It's not for me to judge ye, Jeroboam." (Brother Bart never

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shortened that Scriptural title.) "But I bless the Lord day and night that I was not called to the sea.—What is it the boys are after now!" he added, with an anxious glance at the boat in which laddie and Dan had ventured out beyond his call.

"Lobsters," replied Captain Jeb. "Them's Neb's lobster pots bobbing up thar, and they've got a catch that will give us a dinner fit for a king."

"It's all to your taste," said Brother Bart. "Barrin' fast days, of which I say nothing, I wouldn't give a good Irish stew for all the fish that ever swam the seas. But laddie is thrivin' on the food here, I must say. There's a red in his cheeks I haven't seen for months; but what with the rocks and the seas and the Devil's Jaw foreninst them, it will be the mercy of God if I get the four boys safe home."

"You needn't fear," was the cheering assurance. "They are fine, strapping fellows, and a touch of sailor life won't harm them; though it's plain them two big chaps and little Polly's boy are used to softer quarters. But for a long voyage I'd ship Mate Danny before any of them."

"Ye would?" asked Brother Bart.

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"Aye," answered Captain Jeb, decisively. "Don't fly no false colors, sticks to his job, ready to take hold of anything from a lobster pot to a sheet anchor,—honest grit straight through. Lord, what a ship captain he would make! But they don't teach navigation at your school."

"I don't know," answered Brother Bart. "I'm not book-learned, as I've told ye; but there's little that isn't taught at St. Andrew's that Christian lads ought to know; to say nothing of God's holy law, which is best of all; but of navigation I never hear tell. I'm thinking it can't be much good."

"No good!" repeated the Captain, staring. "Navigation no good! Lord! you're off your reckoning thar sure, Padre. Do you know what navigation means? It means standing on your quarter-deck and making your ship take its way over three thousand miles of ocean straight as a bird flies to its nest; it means holding her in that ar way with the waves a-swelling mountain high and the wind a-bellowing in your rigging, and a rocky shore with all its teeth set to grind her in your lee; it means knowing how to look to the sun

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and the stars when they're shining, and how to steer without them when the night is too black to see. Where would you and I be now, Padre, if a navigator that no landlubbers could down had not struck out without map or chart to find this here America of ours hundreds of years ago?"

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Brother Bart. "But there seems to be sense and truth in what you say. It's a pity you haven't the light of Faith."

"What would it do for me?" asked Captain Jeb, briefly.

"What would it do for you?" repeated Brother Bart. "Sure it's in the black darkness you are, my man, or ye wouldn't ask. It's sailing on the sea of life ye are without sun or stars, and how ye are to find the way to heaven I don't know. Do ye ever say a prayer, Jeroboam?"

"No," was the gruff answer. "That's your business, Padre. The Lord don't expect no praying from rough old salts like me."

"Sure and He does,—He does," said Brother Bart, roused into simple earnestness. "What is high or low to Him? Isn't He the Lord and Maker of the land

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and sea? Doesn't He give ye life and breath and strength and health and all that ye have? And to stand up like a dumb brute under His eye and never give Him a word of praise or thanks! I wonder at ye, Jeroboam,—I do indeed! Sure ye'd be more dacent to any mortal man that gave ye a bit and sup; but what ye're not taught, poor man, ye can't know. Listen now: ye're to take us to church to-morrow according to your bargain."

"Yes," said the Captain, gruffly; "but thar warn't no bargain about preaching and praying and singing."

"Sure I don't ask it," said Brother Bart, sadly. "You're in haythen darkness, Jeroboam, and I haven't the wisdom or the knowledge or the holiness to lade ye out; but there's one prayer can be said in darkness as well as in light. All I ask ye to do is to stand for a moment within the church and turn your eyes to the lamp that swings like a beacon light before the altar and whisper the words of that honest man in the Bible that didn't dare to go beyant the holy door, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner!' Will ye do that?"

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“Wal, since that’s all ye ask of me, Padre,” said Captain Jeb, reflectively, “I can’t say no. I’ve thought them words many a time when the winds was a-howling and the seas a-raging, and it looked as if I was bound for Davy Jones’ Locker before day; but I never knew that was a fair-weather prayer. But I’ll say it as you ask; and I’ll avow, Padre, that, for talking and praying straight to the point, you beat any preacher or parson I ever heard yet.”

“Preach, is it!” exclaimed Brother Bart. “Sure I never preached in my life, and never will. But I’ll hold ye to your word, Jeroboam; and, with God’s blessing, we’ll be off betimes to-morrow morning.—Here come the boys: and, Holy Mother, look at the boatful of clawing craythurs they have with them!”

“Lobsters, Brother Bart!” shouted Freddy, triumphantly. “Lobsters, Captain Jeb! Fine big fellows. Hurry them up, Dan! I’m hungry as three bears.”

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XIII.—AT BEACH CLIFF.

BROTHER BART and his boys were up betimes for their Sunday journey. Breakfast was soon dispatched, and four sun-burned youngsters were ready for their trip to town. Dud and Jim, who had been lounging around Killykinick in sweaters and middies, were spruced up into young gentlemen again. Freddy's rosy cheeks were set off by a natty little sailor suit and cap; while Dan scarcely recognized himself in one of the rigs presented by Brother Francis, that bore the stamp of a stylish tailor, and that had been sponged and pressed and mended by the kind old wardrobian until it was quite as good as new.

The day was bright and beautiful, sky and sea seemed smiling on each other most amicably. The "Sary Ann" was in the best of spirits, and the wind in the friendliest of moods.

"Sit steady, boys, and don't be philandering!" warned Brother Bart, anxiously. "It looks fair and aisy enough, but you

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can drown in sun as well as storm. Keep still there, laddie, or ye'll be over the edge of the boat. Sure it's an awful thing to think that there's only a board between ye and the judgment-seat of God."

And Brother Bart shook his head, and relapsed into meditation befitting the peril of his way; while the "Sary Ann" swept on, past rock and reef and shoal, out into the wide blue ocean, where the sunlit waves were swelling in joyous freedom, until the roofs and spires of Beach Cliff rose dimly on the horizon; white-winged sails began to flutter into sight; wharves and boat-houses came into view, and the travellers were back in the busy world of men again.

"It feels good to be on God's own earth again," said Brother Bart, as he set foot on the solid pier, gay just now with a holiday crowd; for the morning boat was in, and the "Cliff Dwellers," as the residents of the old town were called at livelier seaside resorts, were out in force to welcome the new arrivals.

"This is something fine!" said Dud to Jim, as they made their way through the chatting, laughing throng, and caught

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the lilt of the music on the beach beyond, where bathers, reckless of the church bells' call, were disporting themselves in the sunlit waves. "It's tough, with a place like this so near, to be shut up on a desert island for a whole vacation. I say, Jim, let's look up the Fosters after Mass, and see if we can't get a bid to their house for a day or two. We'll have some fun there."

"I don't know," answered easy Jim. "Killykinick is good enough for me. You have to do so much fussing and fixing when you are with girls. Still, now we are here, we might as well look around us."

So when Mass in the pretty little church was over, and Brother Bart, glad to be back under his well-loved altar light, lingered at his prayers, the boys, who had learned from Captain Jeb that they had a couple of hours still on their hands, proceeded to explore the quaint old town, with its steep, narrow streets, where no traffic policemen were needed; for neither street cars nor automobiles were allowed to intrude.

In the far long ago, Beach Cliff had been a busy and prosperous seaport town.

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The great sailing vessels of those days, after long and perilous voyage, made harbor there; the old shipmasters built solid homes on the island shores; its merchants grew rich on their whaling vessels, that went forth to hunt for these monsters of the great deep, and came back laden with oil and blubber and whalebone and ambergris. But all this was changed now. Steam had come to supplant the white wings that had borne the old ships on their wide ocean ways. As Captain Jeb said, "the airth had taken to spouting up ile," and made the long whale hunts needless and unprofitable. But, though it had died to the busy world of commerce and trade, the quaint old island town had kept a charm all its own, that drew summer guests from far and near.

Dud and Jim made for the resident streets, where old Colonial mansions stood amid velvety lawns, and queer little low-roofed houses were buried in vines and flowers. But Dan and Freddy kept to the shore and the cliff, where the old fishermen had their homes, and things were rough and interesting. They stopped at an old weather-beaten house that had

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in its low windows all sorts of curious things—models of ships and boats, odd bits of pottery, rude carvings, old brasses and mirrors,—the flotsam and jetsam from broken homes and broken lives that had drifted into this little eddy.

The proprietor, a bent and grizzled old man, who stood smoking at the door, noticed the young strangers.

“Don’t do business on Sundays; but you can step in, young gentlemen, and look about you. ’Twon’t cost you a cent; and I’ve things you won’t see anywhar else on this Atlantic coast,—brass, pottery, old silver, old books, old papers, prints of rare value and interest. A Harvard professor spent two hours the other day looking over my collection.”

“Is it a museum?” asked Freddy politely, as he and Dan peered doubtfully over the dusky threshold.

“Wal, no, not exactly; though it’s equal to that, sonny. Folks call this here Jonah’s junk-shop,—Jonah being my Christian name. (I ain’t never had much use for any other.) I’ve been here forty years, and my father was here before me,—buying and selling whatever comes

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to us. And things do come to us sure, from copper kettles that would serve a mess of sixty men, down to babies' bonnets."

"Babies' bonnets!" laughed Dan, who, with Freddy close behind him, had pushed curiously but cautiously into the low, dark room, from which opened another and another, crowded with strangely assorted merchandise.

"You may laugh," said the proprietor, "but we've had more than a dozen trunks and boxes filled with such like folderols. Some of 'em been here twenty years or more,—shawls and bonnets and ball dresses, all frills and laces and ribbons; baby bonnets, too, all held for duty and storage or wreckage and land knows what. Flung the whole lot out for auction last year, and the women swarmed like bees from the big hotels and the cottages. Got bits of yellow lace, they said, for ten cents that was worth as many dollars. The men folks tried to 'kick' about fever and small-pox in the old stuff, but not a woman would listen. Look at that now!" And the speaker paused under a chandelier that, even in the dusky dimness, glittered

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with crystal pendants. "Set that ablaze with the fifty candles it was made to hold, and I bet a hundred dollars wouldn't have touched it forty years ago. Ye can buy it to-morrow for three and a quarter. That's the way things go in Jonah's junk-shop."

"And do you ever really sell anything?" asked Dan, whose keen business eye, being trained by early bargaining for the sharp needs of life, could see nothing in Jonah's collection worth a hard-earned dollar. Mirrors with dingy and broken frames loomed ghost-like up in the dusky corners; tarnished epaulets and sword hilts told pathetically of forgotten honors; there were clocks, tall and stately, without works and pendulum.

"Sell?" echoed the proprietor. "Of course, sonny, we sell considerable, specially this time of year when the rich folks come around,—folks that ain't looking for stuff that's whole or shiny. And they do bite curious, sure. Why, there was some sort of a big man come up here in his yacht a couple of years ago that gave me twenty-five dollars for a furrin medal,—twenty-five dollars cash down. And it

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wasn't gold or silver neither. Said he knew what it was worth, and I didn't."

"Twenty-five dollars!" exclaimed the astonished Freddy,—“twenty-five dollars for a medal! O Dan, then maybe yours is worth something, too.”

“Pooh, no!” said Dan, “what would poor old Nutty be doing with a twenty-five dollar medal?”

The dull eyes of the old junk dealer kindled with quick interest.

“Hev you got a medal?” he asked. “Where did you get it?”

“From a batty old sailor man who thought I had done him some good turns,” answered Dan. “Where he got it he didn’t say. I don’t think he could remember.”

And Dan, whose only safe deposit for boyish treasures was his jacket pocket, pulled out the gift that Freddy had refused, and showed it to this new acquaintance, who, holding it off in his horny hand, blinked at it with practised eye.

“Portygee or Spanish, I don’t know which it says on that thar rim. Thar ain’t much of it silver. I’d have to rub it up to be sure of the rest. Date, well as I can make out, it’s 1850.”

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"It is," said Dan. "I made that much out myself."

Old Jonah shook his head.

"Ain't far enough back. Takes a good hundred years to make an antique. Still, you can't tell. The ways of these great folks are queer. Last week I sold for five dollars a bureau that I was thinking of splitting up into firewood; and the woman was as tickled as if she had found a purse of money. Said it was Louey Kans. Who or what she was I don't know; mebbe some kin of hers. I showed her the break plain, for I ain't no robber; but she said that didn't count a mite,—that she could have a new glass put in for ten dollars. Ten dollars! Wal, thar ain't no telling about rich folks' freaks and foolishness; so I can't say nothing about that thar medal. It ain't the kind of thing I'd want to gamble on. But if you'd like to leave it here on show, I'll take care of it, I promise you; and mebbe some one may come along and take a notion to it."

"Oh, what's the good?" said Dan, hesitating.

"Dan, do—do!" pleaded Freddy, who saw a chance for the vacation pocket money

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his chum so sorely lacked. "You might get twenty-five dollars for it, Dan."

"He might," said old Jonah; "and then agin he mightn't, sonny. I ain't promising any more big deals like them I told you about. But you can't ever tell in this here junk business whar or when luck will strike you. It goes hard agin my old woman to hev all this here dust and cobwebs. She has got as tidy a house as you'd ask to see just around the corner,—flower garden in front, and everything shiny. But if I'd let her in here with a bucket and broom she'd ruin my business forever. It's the dust and the rust and the cobwebs that runs Jonah's junk-shop. But it's fair and square. I put down in writing all folks give me to sell, and sign my name to it. If you don't gain nothing, you don't lose nothing."

Dan was thinking fast. Twenty-five dollars,—twenty-five dollars! There was only a chance, it is true; and a very slim chance at that. But what would twenty-five dollars mean to him, to Aunt Winnie? For surely and steadily, in the long, pleasant summer days, in the starlit watches of the night, his resolution was

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growing: he must live and work for Aunt Winnie; he could not leave her gentle heart to break in its loneliness, while he climbed to heights beyond her reach; he could not let her die, while he dreamed of a future she would never see. Being only a boy, Dan did not put the case in just such words. He only felt with a fierce determination that, in spite of the dull pain in his heart at the thought, he must give up St. Andrew's when this brief seaside holiday was past, and work for Aunt Winnie. And a little ready cash to make a new start in Mulligans' upper rooms would help matters immensely. Just now he had not money enough for a fire in the rusty little stove, or to move Aunt Winnie and her old horsehair trunk from the Little Sisters.

"All right!" he said, with sudden resolve. "Take the medal and try it."

And old Jonah, who was not half so dull as, for commercial purposes, he looked, turned to an old mahogany desk propped up on three legs, and gave the young owner a duly signed receipt for one silver-rimmed bronze medal, date 1850, and the business was concluded.

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"Suppose you really get twenty-five dollars, Dan," said Freddy, as they bade old Jonah good-bye and kept on their way. "What will you do with it?"

"I'm not saying," replied Dan, mindful of his promise to Father Mack. "But I'll start something, you can bet, Freddy!"

And then they went on down to the wharf, where the "Sary Ann" lay at her moorings, and Brother Bart was seated on a bench in pleasant converse with the Irish sexton of the little church, who had been showing the friendly old Brother some of the sights of the town.

"Here come my boys now. This is Dan Dolan, and this is my own laddie that I've been telling ye about, Mr. McNally. And where—where are the others?" questioned Brother Bart, anxiously.

"I don't know," answered Dan, after he had reciprocated Mr. McNally's hearty hand-shake. "Dud said something about going to the Fosters."

"Sure and that isn't hard to find," said Mr. McNally. "It's one of the biggest places on Main Street, with hydrangeas growing like posies all around the door. Any one will show ye."

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“Go back for them, Danny lad. Ye can leave laddie here with me while ye bring the others back; for the day is passing, and we must be sailing home.”

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XIV.—POLLY.

MAIN STREET was not hard to find, neither seemed the Fosters. A corner druggist directed Dan without hesitation to a wide, old-fashioned house, surrounded by lawns and gardens, in which the hydrangeas—blue, pink, purple—were in gorgeous summer bloom. But, though the broad porch was gay with cushions and hammocks, no boys were in sight; and, lifting the latch of the iron gate, Dan was proceeding up the flower-girdled path to the house, when the hall door burst open and a pretty little girl came flying down the steps in wild alarm.

“Bobby!” she cried. “My Bobby is out! Bobby is gone! Oh, somebody catch Bobby, please,—somebody catch my Bobby!”

A gush of song answered the wail. Perched upon the biggest and pinkest of the hydrangeas was a naughty little canary, its head on one side warbling defiantly in the first thrill of joyous freedom. Its deserted mistress paused

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breathlessly. A touch, a movement, she knew would send him off into sunlit space beyond her reach forever.

Quick-witted Dan caught on to the situation. A well-aimed toss of his cap, and the hydrangea blooms were quivering under the beat of the captive's fluttering wings. Dan sprang forward and with a gentle, cautious hand grasped his prisoner.

"Oh, oh, oh!" was all the little lady could cry, clasping her hands rapturously. "Don't—don't hurt him, please, please!"

"I won't," was the answer. "But get his cage quick; for he's scared to death at my holding him."

Bobby's mistress darted into the house at the word, and reappeared again in a moment with a gilded palace that was surely all a bird could ask for.

"O Bobby, Bobby!" she murmured reproachfully, as Dan deposited his subdued and trembling captive behind the glittering bars. "When you had this lovely new cage and everything you wanted!"

"No, he hadn't," said Dan, conscious of a sudden sympathy with this feathered prisoner. "He has wings and wants to use them."

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"But he couldn't find seed or chickweed for himself, and the cats and hawks would have had him before morning. Oh, I'm so glad to get him back safe I don't know how to thank you for catching him for me!" And the little lady lifted a pair of violet eyes, that were still sparkling with tears, to her benefactor's face.

"Pooh! It wasn't anything," said Dan, shyly.

"Yes, it was. You threw your cap fine. My brothers couldn't have done it, I know. They would have just laughed and teased, and let Bobby fly away forever. You are the nicest boy I ever saw," continued Bobby's mistress, who was at the age when young ladies speak their mind frankly. "What is your name?"

"Dan Dolan," was the reply, with the smile that showed Aunt Winnie's boy at his best. "Let me carry your bird cage to the house for you. It is too heavy for a little girl."

"Oh, thank you! But I'm not such a little girl as you think: I am nearly ten years old," said the young lady, as Dan took up Bobby and his cage, and they proceeded up the broad gravelled path to

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the house; "and my name is Polly Forester, and—"

"Forester!" blurted out Dan. "Then I'm on the wrong track. They told me this was the Foster house."

"Oh, no!" Miss Polly shook her head, that, with its golden brown ringlets, looked very much like a flower itself. "This has been our house for more than a hundred years. My grandfather lived here, and my great-grandfather and all my grandfathers. One of them fought with George Washington; we've got his sword. Would you like to see it?" asked Miss Polly, becoming graciously hospitable as they approached the porch.

"I'm afraid I haven't time," answered Dan. "You see, I'm looking for two of our fellows. We're a lot of St. Andrew's boys off for the summer, and the boat is waiting to take us back to Killykinick."

"Oh, are you staying there?" asked the young lady, with wide-eyed interest. "I've passed it often in dad's yacht."

"Polly dear!" called a sweet voice, and a grown-up image of that young person came hurriedly out on the porch,—a lovely lady, all in soft trailing white and

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blue ribbons. "What is the matter? Your cry woke me out of a sound sleep and put me all in a flutter."

"O mamma dear, I'm sorry! But it was Bobby. He flew out of his cage when I was trying to teach him to perch on my hand, and got away. He would have gone forever if this nice boy had not caught him for me! His name is Dan Dolan, mamma, and he is staying at Killykinick with a lot of college boys. Dan is looking for the other boys, who are at the Fosters; and some one told him this was the house, and he came just in time to catch my Bobby under his cap, and—"

"The Fosters?" interrupted mamma, who was used to clearing up things for Polly. "Probably you are looking for Colonel Foster, who came down last week," she continued, turning a smiling face to Dan. "They have rented the Pelham cottage for the summer. You know where that is, Polly?"

"Oh, yes!" answered the little lady, cheerfully. "You take care of Bobby, mamma, and I'll show Dan the short cut through our garden."

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And she darted ahead through an old-fashioned maze, where tall box hedges were clipped into queer shapes around beds of gay blooming flowers. Then, swinging open a vine-wreathed gate, Dan's little guide led into a steep narrow way paved with cobblestones.

"Pelham cottage is just up there," she said, "at the top of Larboard Lane."

"And here the boys come now!" exclaimed Dan, as the sound of familiar voices reached his ear, and down the lane came a laughing, chattering group,—Minna Foster, and her sister Madge and brother Jack gleefully escorting Jim and Dud back to the boat, and claiming the promises of speedy return to Beach Cliff.

Dan hailed his schoolmates, explained his search and his mistake, and they were all taking their way down the stony path together,—Polly being of the sort to make friends at once with every nice boy or girl within reach.

"Isn't she the cutest thing?" said Minna Foster, who had fallen behind with Dud. "We have just been dying to know them; but her mother is an invalid, and doesn't go out much, though

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they are the finest people in Beach Cliff, mamma says. They have lots of money, and the loveliest old home filled with all sorts of beautiful things, and horses and carriages and a big yacht."

"And Dan Dolan has struck it with them," said Dud, watching Miss Pollys' dancing along loyally by her nice boy's side. "Dan Dolan! Can't you give them a tip about him?"

"A tip?" echoed Minna, puzzled.

"Yes," said Dud, his brow darkening. "People like that don't want to know such low-down chumps as Dan Dolan. Why, he's in St. Andrew's on charity; hasn't got a decent rag to his back except what we give him there; used to shine shoes and sell papers on the streets. His aunt is in the poorhouse or something next to it; he's just a common tough, without a cent to call his own."

"Goodness!" gasped Miss Minna. "Then what is he doing up here with boys like you?"

"Pushed in," answered Dud, hotly. "He has enough nerve to push anywhere. St. Andrew's gives a scholarship at the parochial school, and he won it; and, as

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he hadn't any place to go this summer, they bunched him in with us. But you can see what he is at one look."

"Oh, I did,—I did!" murmured Miss Minna. "I saw at the very first that he was not our sort; but, being with nice boys like you, I thought he must be all right. He isn't bad-looking, and such nerve for a bootblack! Just look how he is making up to little Polly Forester!"

To an impartial observer it would have really seemed the other way. Polly herself was "making up" most openly to this nicest boy she ever saw. Tripping along by Dan's side, she was extending a general invitation, in which Dan was specialized above all others.

"I am going to have a birthday party next week, and I want you to come, and bring all the other boys from Killykinick. It's the first party I've ever had; but mamma is feeling better this year, and I'll be ten years old, and she's going to have things just lovely for me,—music and dancing, and ice-cream made into flowers and birds, and a Jack Horner pie with fine presents in it. Wouldn't you like to come, Dan?"

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"You bet!" was the ready answer; for a party of young persons like Miss Polly was, from his outlook, a very simple affair. "When is it coming off?"

"Thursday," said Polly,—*"Thursday evening at six, in our garden. And you needn't dress up. Boys hate to dress up, I know; Tom and Jack won't go any place where they have to wear stiff collars."*

"I'm with them there," rejoined Dan. "Had to get into one on Commencement Day, and never want to try another."

"You see, I don't care for some boys," said the expectant hostess, confidentially. "All Tom's and Jack's friends are in long trousers. Some girls like that, but I don't: they look too grown up, and they stand around and tease, and won't play games, and are just horrid. You would play games, I'm sure."

"Just try me at them," answered Dan, grinning.

"Oh, I know you would! So I want you all to come," said Miss Polly, who, having reached her own gateway, paused for a general good-bye. "I don't know your names, but I want you all to come with Dan to my party."

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"If we can get here," replied Dan. "Captain Jeb wouldn't trust us to sail his boat, and I don't know that he could come with us."

"Oh, he will,—he must!" persisted Polly.

"He ain't the will-and-must kind," said Dan, nodding.

"Then maybe I can send for you," the little lady went on eagerly. "My cousins are coming over from Rockhaven on dad's yacht, and I'll make them stop at Killykinick and bring you all with them to my party."

And, with a gay little nod that included all her nice boys, little Miss Polly disappeared among the hydrangeas; while the others kept on down to the wharf, where the "Sary Ann" was already swinging out her dingy sail, and Brother Bart was growing anxious and nervous.

Merry good-byes were spoken, and very soon the boys were on their homeward way, with Beach Cliff slowly vanishing in the distance. Dud was rather sullen and disappointed; lazy Jim a little tired; while Freddy, seated in the bottom of the boat, dropped his curly head on Brother Bart's knee and went off to sleep.

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But to Dan the day had been a most pleasant experience, a glimpse of a friendly, beautiful world whose gates he had never thought to pass; and Aunt Winnie's Dan was very happy as he steered the "Sary Ann" over a smiling summer sea without a clouding shadow.

"How did you push in so quick to the Foresters?" sneered Dud.

"Looking for two lost donkeys," retorted Dan, who was learning to give Dud as good as he sent.

"Maybe you think you'll get there again," said Dud. "Well, you won't, I can tell you that. It was all very well to make up so strong to a little fool girl; but they are the tiptoppers of Beach Cliff, and you won't hear any more of Miss Polly's yacht or her party."

"I'm not worrying over that, are you?" said Dan, philosophically. "You look as if you had a grouch on about something."

"I have," blurted out Dud, fiercely. "I hate this horrid Killykinick and everything on it; and I'm not going to be mixed up before decent people with roughs and toughs that are fit only to black my boots—like, you, Dan Dolan!"

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XV.—A RESCUE.

FOR a moment Dan's blue eyes flashed, his strong arm quivered. Every hardy nerve was tingling to strike out at the insolent speaker who lost no opportunity to fling a scornful word. But this beautiful day had left holy as well as happy memories. Dan had knelt at Brother Bart's side before the altar light, that through all his hard rough young life had been Aunt Winnie's boy's beacon,—a beacon that had grown clearer and brighter with his advancing years, until it seemed to rise above earth into the dazzling radiance of the stars. Its steady light fell upon his rising passion now, and his fury broke as the swelling surf breaks upon the beacon rock—into foam and spray.

"It is a sort of mix up, I must say," he answered. "But I'm out of the boot-black business for good and all; so what are you going to do about it?"

"Cut the whole lot," said Dud; "just as soon as I can get the money to do it."

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"Well, I won't cry after you, I'm sure," retorted Dan, good-humoredly; though there was a spark in his eye that told the fire was smouldering still, as even under the beacon light such fires sometimes do.

But a stentorian shout from Captain Jeb put an end to the altercation.

"Wind's a-veering! Swing round that ar boom, matey Dan! Duck, the rest of you boys,—duck—quick!"

Freddy was asleep, with his head pillowed safely on Brother Bart's knee. Jim was dozing in the stern, out of harm's reach; but on Dud, seated at the edge of the boat and fuming with rage and pride, the warning fell unheeded. As the sail swung round there was a splash, a shriek.

"He is overboard! God have mercy on us!" cried Brother Bart, roused from his third Glorious Mystery of the Rosary.

"Didn't I tell you to duck, ye rascal?" roared Captain Jeb, to whom a tumble like this seemed only a boy's fool trick.

"Back aboard with ye, ye young fool! Back—aboard! Don't ye know there's sharks about in these waters? Lord, ef he ain't gone down!"

"He can't—can't swim!" And Jim, who

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had started up half awake and who could swim like a duck, was just about to plunge after Dud, when he caught the word that chilled even his young blood to ice—*sharks!* Jim knew what sharks meant. He had seen a big colored man in his own Southern waters do battle with one, and had sickened at the memory ever since.

“A rope,—a rope!” thundered Captain Jeb, whose right leg had been stiffened for all swimming in deep waters ten years ago. “If he goes down again, it’s forever.”

“O God have mercy! God have mercy!” prayed Brother Bart, helplessly; while Freddy shrieked in shrill alarm.

In that first wild moment of outcry, Dan had stood breathless while a tide of feeling swept over him that held him mute, motionless. Dud! It was Dud who had been swept over into those foaming, seething depths. Dud, whose stinging words were still rankling in his thoughts and heart; Dud, who hated, scorned, despised him; Dud, who could not swim, and—and there were sharks,—sharks!

Dan was trembling now in every strong limb,—trembling, it seemed to him, in body and soul. Sharks! Sharks! And it

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was Dud.—Dud who had said Dan was fit only to black his boots!

“O God have mercy! Mother Mary—Mother Mary, save him!” prayed poor Brother Bart.

At the words Dan steadied,—steadied to the beacon light,—steadied into Aunt Winnie’s boy again.

“Don’t scare, Brother Bart!” rang out his clear young voice. “I’ll get him.”

“Dan! Dan!” shrieked Freddy, as, with the practised dive of the Wharf Rats, the lithe young form plunged into the water. “O Dan,—my Dan, the sharks will get you, too! Come back! Come back, Dan!”

Dan caught the words as he struck out blindly, desperately, almost hopelessly, through depths such as he had never braved before. For this was not the safe land-bound harbor; this was not the calm lap of the river around the sheltering wharf. This was a world of waters, seething, surging, roaring around him, peopled with hunting creatures hungry for prey.

“Dan, Dan!” came his little chum’s piercing cry as he rose for breath.

“Come back, ye fool!” thundered Cap-

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tain Jeb. "He's gone, I tell ye,—the boy is gone down!"

But even at the shout something dark swept within touch of Dan's outstretched arm; he made a clutch at it and grasped Dud,—Dud choking, gasping, struggling,—Dud, who sinking for the last time caught Dan in a grip that meant death for both of them.

"Let go!" spluttered Dan, fiercely,—
"let go! Let go or we'll drown together!"
And then, as the deadly clutch only tightened, Dan did what all Wharf Rats knew they must do in such cases—struck out with the full strength of his hardy young fist; and, knocking the clinging Dud's fast-failing wits completely out of him, swam back with his helpless burden to the "Sary Ann."

"The Lord, matey, but you are a game un!" said Captain Jeb, as he and Jim dragged Dud aboard.

"Ah, God have mercy upon the poor lad's soul! It's dead entirely he is!" sobbed Brother Bart.

"Not a bit of it!" said Dan, scrambling up the side of the "Sary Ann." "He's just knocked out. I had to knock him

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out, or he would have pulled me down with him. Roll him over a little, so he can spit out the water, and he'll be all right."

"Sure he is,—he is!" murmured Brother Bart, as Dud began to cough and splutter encouragingly. "It's gone forever I thought he was, poor lad! Oh, God bless you for this day's work, Dan Dolan,—bless you and keep you His forever!"

"It was a close shave for all hands," said Captain Jeb, permitting himself a long-drawn sigh of relief, as Dan, after shaking himself like a water-dog, sank down, a little pale and breathless, at his side. "And you were what most folk would call a consarned fool, matey. Didn't you hear me say these 'ere waters had sharks in 'em?"

"Yes," said Dan, whose eyes were fixed upon a drift of sunlit cloud in the blue distance.

"Then what the deuce did you do it for?" said Captain Jeb, severely.

"Couldn't let a fellow drown," was the brief answer.

"Warn't nothing special to you, was he?" growled the old sailor, who was still

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fiercely resentful of his "scare." "Ain't ever been perticular nice or soft spoken as I ever heard to you. And you jumping in to be gobbled by sharks, for him, like he was your own twin brother! You're a fool, matey,—a durn young fool!"

And Dan, who understood his old sailor friend, only laughed,—laughed while his eyes still followed the drift of swinging cloud fringing the deep blue of the sky. They were like the robe of the only Mother he had ever known,—the sweet Mother on whom Brother Bart had called to save Dud. And Dan had heard and obeyed, and he felt with a happy heart his Mother was smiling on him now.

But to Dud this thrilling adventure left no pleasant memories. He was sick for several days from his overdose of salt water, weak and nervous from fright and shock; there was a bruise over his eye from the saving impact of Dan's sturdy fist, which he resented most unreasonably. More than all, he resented the chorus that went up from all at Killykinick in praise of Dan's heroism.

Jim testified openly and honestly that the cry of "Sharks" got him, and he

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couldn't have dared a plunge in those waters to save his own brother.

"I saw a nigger cut in half by one of those man-eaters once, and it makes my flesh creep to think of it."

Even dull-witted old Neb rose to show appreciation of Dan's bold plunge, and said he "reckoned all boys wuth anything did sech fool tricks some times."

Good old Brother Bart felt it was a time for warning and exhortation, which Dud found altogether exasperating.

"Sure it's on your knees you ought to go morning and evening to thank God for bould, brave Dan Dolan. If it hadn't been for him, it's food for the fishes ye'd be now. The Lord was merciful to ye, lad; for I'm misdoubting if ye were fit for heaven. Though it's not for me to judge, ye have a black look betimes, as if God's grace wasn't in yer heart. This ought to be a lesson to ye,—a lesson that ye should never forget."

"I'm not likely to forget it," was the grim answer. "I couldn't if I tried."

"And I'm glad to hear ye say so," said the simple-minded old Brother. "I'm thinking sometimes ye're not over friendly

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with Dan. It was a rough bating he gave ye before we left the college." (Dud's black looks grew blacker at the memory.)

"But he has more than made it up to ye now, for he has given ye back yer life."

"And what are you going to give him for it, Dud?" questioned Freddy confidentially, as the good Brother moved away.

"Give who?" growled Dud, who was sick and sore and savage over the whole experience, and, strange to say—but such are the peculiarities of some natures,—felt as if he hated his preserver more than ever.

"Why, Dan!" continued Freddy. "You always give a person something when he saves your life. Dick Walton told me that a man saved him when he was carried out in the surf last summer, and his father gave the man a gold watch."

"So Dan Dolan wants a gold watch, does he?" said Dud.

"Oh, no!" answered Freddy, quite unconscious of the sneer in the question.

"I don't think Dan wants a gold watch at all. He would not know what to do with one. But if I were you," continued Dan's little chum, his eyes kindling with

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loyal interest, "I'd make it a pocket-book,—a nice leather pocket-book, with a place for stamps and car tickets and money, and I'd just fill it *chock* full. You see, Dan hasn't much pocket money. He pulled out his purse the other day at Beach Cliff to get a medal that was in it, and he had only a nickel and two stamps to write to his aunt."

"So your brave Dan is striking for ready cash, is he?" said Dud, in a tone that even innocent Freddy could not mistake, and that Dan coming up the beach with a net full of kicking lobsters caught in all its sting.

"Ready cash," he asked, looking from one to the other. "For what?"

"Pulling me out of the water the other day," answered Dud. "Freddy says you're expecting pay for it."

"Well, I'm *not*," said Dan, the spark flashing into his blue eyes. "You're 'way off there, Freddy, sure."

"Oh, I didn't mean,—I didn't say," began poor little Freddy, desperately. "I only thought people always got medals or watches or something when they saved other people, and I told Dud—"

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"Never mind what you told him, kid" (Dan laid a kind hand on his little chum's shoulder); "you meant it all right, I know. But Dud" (the spark in the speaker's eye flashed brighter),—"Dud didn't."

"I did," said Dud. "My father will pay you all you want."

Then Dan blazed up indeed into Irish fire.

"I don't want his pay: I wouldn't touch it. You ain't worth it, Dud Fielding."

"Ain't worth what? My father is worth a million," said Dud quickly.

"*That* for his million!" and Dan snapped his two fishy fingers under Dud's Grecian nose. "You ain't worth a buffalo nickel, Dud Fielding; and I wouldn't ask one for saving your measly little life."

And Dan went off with his lobsters, in a wrath almost fiery enough to boil them alive. Pay!—pay for that wild plunge into watery depths—the doubt, the fear, the icy terror of hungry monsters around him! Dud Fielding was offering him pay for this, very much as he might fling pay to him for blacking his boots. Ah, it was a fierce, bad moment for Dan! His beacon light vanished; murky clouds of passion

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were blackening dream and vision; he felt he could cheerfully pitch Dud back to the sharks again. And then, as still hot and furious, he strode back with his lobsters to old Ned, Freddy, who was remorsefully following him—remorseful at having stirred up a row,—piped up in sudden excitement:

“O Dan, look,—look what’s coming here to Killykinick! Dan, just look!”

Dan turned at the cry. Past Numskull Nob, making her cautious, graceful way through rocks and shoals, was a beautiful white-winged yacht, her mast gay with pennants. One, fluttering wide to the breeze, showed her name, “The Polly.”

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XVI.—A NEW EXPERIENCE.

DAN stood staring in blank amazement, while Freddy's voice rose into shriller triumph:

“Jim, Dud, Brother Bart, look,—look what is coming here!”

She was coming indeed, this white-winged stranger, swaying to the right and left under skilful guidance as she made her way to the Killykinick wharf; for her rugged old Captain knew the perils of the shore. And under the gay awnings that shaded the deck was a merry group of young people, waving their handkerchiefs to the rocky island they were approaching; while Polly's big handsome “dad,” in white linen yachting togs, pointed out the ship house and the wharf, the tower and garden patch,—all the improvements that queer old Great-uncle Joe had made on these once barren rocks. Polly's dad had known about the old captain and his oddities all his life. Indeed, once in his very early years, as he now told his young listeners, he had made a boyish foray

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in Great-uncle Joe's domain, and had been repelled by the old sailor with a vigor never to be forgotten.

"I never had such a scientific thrashing in my life," laughed dad, as if he rather enjoyed the remembrance. "We were playing pirate that summer. I had a new boat that we christened the 'Red Rover,' after Cooper's story; and we rigged her up with a pirate flag, and proceeded to harry the coast and do all the mischief that naughty twelve-year-olds can do. Finally, I proposed, as a crowning adventure, a descent upon Killykinick, pulling down old Joey Kane's mast-head and smashing his lantern. Well, we caught a Tartar there, I can tell you! The old captain never had any use for boys. And to think of the place being full of them now!"

"Oh, no, dad! There are only four," said Polly,—“four real nice boys from St. Andrew's College, and just the right size to come to my party. O Nell, Gracie, look! There they come!"

And the handkerchiefs fluttered again gleefully as "The Polly" made up to the wharf, and the whole population of

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Killykinick turned out to greet her,—even to Brother Bart, who had been reading his well-worn “Imitation” on the beach; and Neb, who, with the bag of potatoes he had just dug up, stood staring dumbly in the distance.

“Killykinick ahoy!” shouted dad, making a speaking trumpet of his hands.

“Aye, aye!” answered Captain Jeb, with his crooked smile. “You’re ‘The Polly’ of Beach Cliff. What’s wanted, Mr. Forester? Clams or lobsters?”—for in these latter days Killykinick did something of a trade in both with the pleasure boats and cottages along the coast.

“Well, we don’t like to call them either; do we, Polly?” laughed dad, as he stepped ashore, while the little girls crowded to the deck rail. “‘The Polly’ is sailing under petticoat orders to-day and is scouring the waters in search of four boys that, we understand, you have here at Killykinick.”

“We have,” answered Captain Jeb,—“or at least the Padre here has. They’re none of mine.”

“I am no Padre, as I’ve told ye again and again, Jeroboam,” interposed Brother Bart. “I am only Brother Bartholomew,

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from St. Andrew's College. And I have four boys here, but they've been under my eye day and night," he continued anxiously; "so, in God's name, what are ye after them for, sir? They have done ye nor yours no harm, I am sure."

"None in the world," said Mr. Forester quickly, as he saw his light speech was not understood. "I was only joking with Captain Jeb. My mission here, I assure you, is most friendly. Permit me to introduce myself, Brother Bar—Bar—Bartholomew—"

"Ye can make it Bart, sir, for short; 'most everyone does," said the good Brother, nodding.

"Then, Brother Bart, I am Mr. Pemberton Forester, of Beach Cliff. I am also known by the briefer and pleasanter name of this little lady's 'dad,' and it is in that official capacity I am here to-day. It seems this little girl of mine met your boys a few days ago at Beach Cliff, where they rendered her most valuable service."

"One—it was only one of them, dad!" corrected Miss Polly's silvery voice. "It was only Dan Dolan who caught my bird and—and—"

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“Well, at all events, the acquaintance progressed most pleasantly and rapidly, as my daughter’s acquaintance is apt to progress; and it resulted in an equally pleasant understanding that the four young gentlemen were to come to a little festivity we are giving in honor of Polly’s birthday,—a garden party in our grounds, between the hours of six and nine. This is the occasion of our present visit, Brother Bart. Fearing that travelling facilities might not be at the young gentlemen’s disposal, we have come to take them to Beach Cliff. If you would like to accompany them—”

“To a party is it?” exclaimed Brother Bart, in dismay. “Me at a party! Sure I’d look and feel queer indeed in such a place.” Brother Bart’s glance turned from the fine boat to the gentleman before him; he felt the responsibilities of his position were growing perplexing. “It will be great sport for the boys, I am sure,” he added; “and I don’t like to say ‘No,’ after all yer kindness in coming for them. But how are they to get back?”

“Oh, we’ll see to that!” answered Mr. Forester, cheerfully. “They will be home

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and safe in your care, by half-past ten,—
I promise you that.”

“Hooray!—hooray!” rose the shout, that the boys who had been listening breathlessly to this discussion could no longer repress.

There was a wild rush to the shining decks of “The Polly,” and soon all her pretty passengers were helped ashore, to scramble and climb as well as their dainty little feet could over the rocks and steepes of Killykinick, to wonder at the gardens and flowers blooming in its nooks and crannies, to peep into cow house and chicken house, and even old Neb’s galley,—to explore the “Lady Jane” from stem to stern in delighted amazement.

Nell and Gracie, who were a little older than their cousin, took possession of Jim and Dud; their small brother Tad attached himself to Freddy, who was about his own age; while Polly claimed her own especial find Dan for escort and guide.

“Oh, what a queer, queer place!” she prattled, as, after peering cautiously into the depths of the Devil’s Jaw, they wended their way to safer slopes, where the rocks were wreathed with hardy vines, and the

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sea stretched smiling into the sunlit distance. "Do you like it here, Dan?"

"Yes: I'm having a fine time," was the cheery answer, for the moment all the pricks and goads forgotten.

"Are you going to stay long?" asked Miss Polly.

"Until September," answered Dan.

"Oh, that's fine!" said his small companion, happily. "Then I'll get dad to bring me down here to see you again, Dan; and you can come up in your boat to see me, and we'll be friends,—real true friends. I haven't had a real true friend," said Miss Polly, perching herself on a ledge of rock, where, in her pink dress and flower-trimmed hat, she looked like a bright winged butterfly,—“not since I lost Meg Murray.”

"Lost her? Did she die?"

"No," was the soft sighing answer. "It was much worse than that. You see" (Miss Polly's tone became confidential), "it was last summer, when I had the whooping cough. Did you ever have the whooping cough?"

"I believe I did," replied Dan, whose memory of such minor ills was by no means clear.

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“Then you know how awful it is. You can’t go to school or out to play, or anywhere. I had to stay in our own garden and grounds by myself, because all the girls’ mothers were afraid of me. The doctor said I must be out of doors, so I had a play house away down by the high box hedge in the maze; and took my dolls and things out there, and made the best of it. And then Meg found me. She was coming down the lane one day, and heard me talking to my dolls. I had to talk to them because there was no one else. And she peeped through the hedge and asked if she could come in and see them. I told her about the whooping cough, but she said she wasn’t afraid: that she had had it three times already, and her mother was dead and wouldn’t mind if she took it again. So she came in, and we played all the morning; and she came the next day and the next for weeks and weeks. Oh, we did have the grandest times together! You see, dad was away, and mamma was sick, and there was no one to bother us. I used to bring out apples and cookies and chocolate drops, and we had parties under

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the trees, and we promised to be real true friends forever. I gave her my pearl ring so she would always remember. It was that pearl ring that made all the trouble." And Miss Polly's voice trembled.

"How?" asked Dan, very gently. He never had a sister or a girl cousin or any one to soften his ways or speech; and little Polly's friendly trust was something altogether new and strangely sweet to him.

"Oh, it broke up everything!" faltered Miss Polly. "That evening an old woman came to the house and asked to see mamma,—oh, such a dreadful old woman! She hadn't any bonnet or coat or gloves,—just a red shawl on her head, and an old patched dress, and a gingham apron. And when James and Elise and everybody told her mamma was sick, she said she *would* see her anyhow. And she did. She pushed her way upstairs to mamma, and talked awfully,—said she was a poor honest woman, if she did sell apples on the corner; and she was raising her grandchild honest; and she asked how her Meg came by that ring, and where she got it. And then mamma, who had turned pale and fluttery, sent for me; and

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I had to tell her all, and she nearly fainted."

"Why?" asked Dan.

"Oh, because—because—I had Meg in the garden and played with her, and took her for a real true friend. You see, she wasn't a nice little girl at all," said Miss Polly, impressively. "Her grandmother had an apple stand at the street corner, and her brother cleaned fish on the wharf, and they lived in an awful place over a butcher's shop; and mamma said she must not come into our garden again, and I mustn't play with her or talk to her ever, *ever* again."

There was no answer for a moment. Dan was thinking—thinking fast. It seemed time for him to say something,—to speak up in his own blunt way,—to put himself in his own honest place. But, with the new charm of this little lady's flattering fancy on him, Dan's courage failed. He felt that to acknowledge a bootblack past and a sausage-shop future would be a shock to Miss Polly that would break off friendly relations forever.

"So you gave up your real true friend?" he said a little reproachfully, as Miss Polly hopped down from her rocky perch

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and proceeded to make her way back to the yacht.

"Yes, I had to, you see. Even dad, who lets me do anything I please, said I must remember that I was a Forester, and make friends that fitted my name. And so—so" (Miss Polly looked up, smiling into Dan's face) "I am going to make friends with you. Dad says he knows all about St. Andrew's College, and you must be first-class boys if you belong there; and he is glad of a chance to give you a little fun. There he is calling us now!"—as a deep voice shouted:

"All aboard, boys and girls! We're off in half an hour! All aboard!"

"Dan—Dan," piped Freddy's small voice. "Jim and Dud are dressing for the party, Dan. Come, we must dress, too."

And Dan, feeling like one venturing into unknown waters, proceeded to make the best of the things good Brother Francis had packed in his small shabby trunk. There was the suit that bore the stamp of the English tailor; there was a pair of low shoes, that pinched a little in the toes; there was a spotless shirt and collar outgrown by some mother's darling, and a

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blue necktie that was all a necktie should be when, with Freddy's assistance, it was put properly in place. Really, it was not a bad-looking boy at all that faced Dan in the "Lady Jane's" swinging mirror when this party toilette was complete.

"You look fine, Dan!" said his little chum, as they took their way down to the wharf where "The Polly" was awaiting them,— "so big and strong and—and—"

"Tough," said Dan, concluding the sentence with a forced laugh. "Well, that's what I am, kid,—big and strong and tough."

"Oh, no, — Dan, no!" said Freddy. "You're not tough at all, and you mustn't say so when you go to a girl's party, Dan."

"Well, I won't," said Dan, as he thought of the violet eyes that would open in dismay at such a confession. "I'll play the highflier to-night if I can, kid; though it's a new game with Dan Dolan, I must say."

And, with a queer sense of shamming that he had never felt before, Aunt Winnie's boy started off for Miss Polly's party.

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XVII.—POLLY'S PARTY.

To all Miss Polly's guests, that evening was a wonderful experience; but to Dan it was an entrance into a fairy realm that his fancy had never pictured; for in the hard, rough ways his childish feet had walked neither fairies nor fancies had place. He had found sailing over sunlit seas in Killykinick's dingy boats a very pleasant pastime; but the "Sary Ann" seemed to sink into a drifting tub when he stood on the spotless deck of "The Polly" as she spread her snowy wings for her homeward flight.

Dad, who, though very rich and great now, still remembered those "pirate days" when he was young himself, proved the most charming of hosts. He took the boys over his beautiful boat, where every bit of shining brass and chain and rope and bit of rigging was in perfect shipshape; and an artful little motor was hidden away for emergencies of wind and tide. There was a lovely little cabin, all in white and gold, with pale blue draperies; and

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two tiny staterooms dainty enough for the slumbers of a fairy queen. There were books and games, and a victrola that sang full-toned boating songs as they glided onward.

Even Dud was properly impressed by the charms of "The Polly"; and Jim was outspoken in his admiration. Freddy was wide-eyed with delight; and Dan was swept quite away from his usual moorings into another world,—a world where Aunt Winnie's boy seemed altogether lost. For, with Miss Polly slipping her little hand in his and guiding him over her namesake, and Freddy telling Tad the story of Dan's dive among the sharks, to which even the man at "The Polly's" wheel listened with interest, with dad so jolly and friendly, and everything so gay and beautiful around him, it was no wonder that Dan's head, accustomed to sober prosy ways, began to turn.

"Dolan,—Dolan? I ought to know that name," said dad, as, with Polly and her "nice" boy at his side, he stood watching the roofs and spires of Beach Cliff come into view. "There was a Phil Dolan in my class at Harvard,—one of

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the finest fellows I ever knew; rolling in money, but it didn't hurt him. He is a judge now, and I think he had a brother at West Point. Are you related to them?"

"No, sir," answered Dan, who at another time would have blurted out that he was not of the Harvard or West Point kind. "I—I am from Maryland."

"Oh, Maryland!" said dad, approvingly. "I see,—I see! The Dolans of Maryland. I've heard of them,—one of the old Catholic families, I think."

"Yes, we're—we're Catholics all right," said Dan, catching to this saving spar of truth, in his doubt and uncertainty. "We—we wouldn't be anything else if we were killed for it."

"Of course you wouldn't. That is your heritage, my boy! Hold fast to it," said dad, heartily. Then he turned about to see that "The Polly" made the way safely to her private wharf, feeling that he left his little girl with the scion of a family quite equal to the Foresters.

With the strange sense of treading in an unreal world, Dan passed on with the rest of the chattering, laughing crowd to the pretty, rustic wharf jutting out into the

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waters, and up to the steep, narrow street where carriages were waiting to take them to the Forester home. The wide grounds and gardens were already gay with the gathering guests. Pretty, flower-decked tables were set in the maze. The trees were hung with Japanese lanterns, that a little later would glow into jewelled lights. There was a group of "grown-ups" on the porch,—mamma, beautiful in cloudy white; sisters and cousins and aunts,—for the Forester family was a large one. There were two grandmothers—one fat and one thin,—very elegant old ladies, with white hair rolled high upon their heads. They looked upon the youthful guests through gold lorgnettes, and were really most awe-inspiring.

The St. Andrew's boys were brought up and "presented" in due form. It was an ordeal. How Dan got through with it he didn't know. He had never before been "presented" to any one but Polly. But dad managed it somehow, and on the porch friendly shadows were gathering that concealed any social discrepancies. Then Polly flitted off to don her party dress, and Dan found himself stranded on

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the danger reefs of this strange world, with dad giving the fat grandmother his family history.

"Dolan?" repeated the old lady, who was a little deaf. "One of the Dolans of Maryland, you say, Pemberton? Dear me! I used to visit Dolan Hall when I was a girl. Such a beautiful old Colonial home! Is it still standing?" she said, turning to Dan.

"I—I don't know, ma'am," stammered Dan, who found the gleam of the gold lorgnettes most confusing.

"What does he say?" asked the old lady sharply.

"That he does not know, mother dear!" answered dad.

"He should know," said the old lady, severely. "The young people are growing up in these careless days without any proper sentiment to the past. A home like Dolan Hall, with its memories and traditions, should be a pride to all of the Dolan blood. The name is really French—D'Olane,—but most unfortunately, as I consider, was anglicized. The family was originally from Touraine, and dates back to the Crusaders, and is most aristocratic."

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"He looks it," murmured the thin grandmother, fixing her lorgnettes on Dan's broad shoulders as he moved away to join Tad and Freddy, who were making friends with Polly's poodle. "I have never seen a boy carry himself better. Blood will tell, as I have always insisted, Stella."

The lady at her side laughed. She, too, had been regarding Dan with curious interest.

"What does it tell, Aunt Lena?" she asked.

"The lady and the gentleman," answered Polly's grandmother.

"Oh, does it?" said the other, softly. "I suppose I am not very wise in such matters, but one of the nicest ladies I ever knew was a little Irish sewing woman who made buttonholes. It was one summer when I went South, more years ago than I care to count; and Winnie—her name was Winnie—came to the house to renovate my riding habit for me."

The speaker paused as if she did not care to say more. She was a slender little person, not awe-inspiring at all. She had just driven up in a pretty, light carriage, and was still muffled in a soft fleecy wrap

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that fell around her like a cloud. The face that looked out from it was sweet and pale as a star. It brightened into radiance as Polly, a veritable fairy now in her party fluffs and ruffs and ribbons, sprang out on the porch and flung herself into Miss Stella's arms.

"Marraine! Marraine!" she cried rapturously,—“my own darling Marraine!”

“Why will you let the child give you that ridiculous name, my dear?” protested grandmamma, disapprovingly.

“Because—because I have the right to it,” laughed the lady, as Polly nestled close to her side. “I am her godmother real and true,—am I not, Pollykins? And we like the pretty French name for it better.”

“Oh, much better!” assented Polly. ““Godmother” is too old and solemn to suit Marraine. Oh!” (with another rapturous hug) “it was so good of you to come all the way from Newport just for my party, dear, dear Marraine!”

“All the way from Newport!” answered the lady. “Why, that dear letter you sent would have brought me from the moon. You will be ten years old to-night, it

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said,—ten years old! O Pollykins! Pollykins!” (There was a little tremor in the voice.) “And you asked if I could come and help you with your party. I could and I would, so here I am! And here is your birthday present.”

Marraine flung a slender golden chain around Polly’s neck.

“Oh, you darling,—you darling!” murmured Polly. “But *you* are the best of all birthday presents, Marraine,—the very best of all!”

“Now, really we must stop all this ‘spooning,’ Pollykins, and start things,” said Marraine, dropping her fleecy cloud on the porch rail behind her, and emerging in a shining silvery robe, with a big bunch of starry jessamine pinned on her breast.

“You are not going to bother with the children, surely, Stella?” said dad, who had drawn near the speaker.

“I am,” said the lady, flashing him a laughing look. “That’s what I came for. I am going to forget the years* (don’t be cruel enough to count them, Cousin Pem), and for two hours (is it only two hours we have, Pollykins?) be a little girl again to-night.”

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And, taking Polly's hand, she tripped away from the grown-ups on the porch, and things were started indeed.

Grove and garden, maze and lawn, suddenly sparkled with jewelled lights; the stringed band in the pagoda burst into gay music. Led by a silvery vision, Polly's guests formed a great ring-around-a-rosy for an opening measure, and the party began. And, with a fairy godmother like Miss Stella leading the fun, it was a party to be remembered. There were marches and games, there was blind man's buff through the jewel-lit maze, there was a Virginia reel to music gay enough to make a hundred-year-old tortoise dance. There was the Jack Horner pie, fully six feet round, and fringed with gay ribbons to pull out the plums. Wonderful plums they were. Minna Foster drew a silver belt buckle; her little sister, a blue locket; Dud, a scarf-pin; Jim, a pocketknife with enough blades and "fixings" to fill a miniature tool chest; and Freddy, a paint box quite as complete; while Dan pulled out the biggest plum of all—a round white box with a silver cord.

As it came out at the end of his red

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ribbon, there was a moment's breathless hush, broken by Polly's glad cry:

"The prize,—the prize, Marraine! Dan has drawn my birthday prize!" And, under a battery of curious and envious eyes, Dan opened the box to find within a pretty gold watch, ticking a most cheering greeting to its new owner.

"Dan,—Dan!" Polly's jubilant voice rose over all the chorus around him. "Oh, I'm so glad you got it, Dan!"

And Marraine's eyes followed Polly's delighted glance with the same look of curious interest that she had bent upon Dan a while ago on the porch.

"Do you mean that this is for me?" he blurted out, in bewilderment.

"Yes, for you,—for *you*," repeated Polly in high glee. "It's real gold and keeps real time, and it's yours forever!"

"It's too—too much—I mean it's—it's too fine for a fellow like me," stammered Dan. "What will I do with it?"

"Wear it," chirped Miss Polly, throwing the silken guard around his neck, "so you will never forget my birthday, Dan."

And then a big Japanese gong sounded the call to the flower-decked tables, where

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busy waiters were soon serving a veritable fairy feast. There were cakes of table-size and shape and color; little baskets and boxes full of wonderful bonbons; nuts sugared and glazed until they did not seem nuts at all; ice-cream birds in nests of spun sugar; "kisses" that snapped into hats and wreaths and caps. And all the while the band played, and the jewelled lights twinkled, and the stars shone far away above the arching trees. And Dan, with his watch around his neck, held his place as the winner of the prize at Miss Polly's side, feeling as if he were in some dizzy dream. Then there were more games, and a grand hide-and-seek, in which dad and some of the grown-ups joined.

Dan had found an especially fine place under the gnarled boughs of an old cedar tree, that would have held its head high in the starlight if some of dad's gardeners had not twisted it out of growth and shape. Hiding under the crooked shadows, Dan was listening to the merry shouts through maze and garden, when he became suddenly conscious of a change in their tone. The voices grew sharp, shrill, excited, and then little Polly burst impetuously

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into his hiding place,—a sobbing, trembling, indignant little Polly, followed by a score of breathless young guests.

“I don’t believe it!” she was crying tempestuously. “I *won’t* believe it! You’re just telling horrid stories on Dan, because I like him and he got the prize.”

“O Pollykins! Pollykins!” came Miss Stella’s low, chiding voice.

“Halloo! halloo! What’s the trouble?” rose dad’s deep tones above the clamor. “My little girl crying,—crying?”

“Yes, I am!” was the sobbing answer. “I can’t help it, dad. The girls are all whispering mean, horrid stories about Dan, and I made them tell me all they said they had heard. I don’t believe them, and I *won’t* believe them! I told them I wouldn’t believe them,—that I would come right to Dan and let him speak for himself.—Were you ever a newsboy and a beggar boy, Dan? Did—did you ever black boots? Have you an aunt in the poor-house, as Minna Foster says?”

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XVIII.—BACK INTO LINE.

THERE was a moment's pause. Dan was really too bewildered to speak. He felt he was reeling down from the rainbow heights to which Miss Polly had led him, and the shock took away his breath.

"It's all—all a horrid story; I'm sure it is,—isn't it, Dan?" pleaded his little friend, tremulously.

"Why, no!" said Dan, rallying to his simple, honest self again. "It isn't a story at all. I *was* a newsboy, I *did* shine boots at the street corner, and Aunt Winnie *is* with the Little Sisters of the Poor now."

"Bravo!—bravo!" came a low silvery voice from the shadows, and Miss Stella clapped her slender hands.

"O Dan, Dan!" cried poor little Miss Polly, sobbing outright. "A newsboy and bootblack! Oh, how could you fool me so, Dan?"

"With your infernal lies about your home and family!" burst forth dad, in sudden wrath at Polly's tears.

"I didn't fool,—I didn't lie, sir!" blurted

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out Dan, fiercely. "I did nothing of the kind!"

"If you will kindly do the boy justice to remember, he did *not*, Cousin Pem!" and Miss Stella's clear, sweet voice rose in witness. "You gave his family history yourself. He did not know what you were talking about, with your Crusading ancestors and the D'Olanes. I could see it in his face. You are all blood-blind up here, Cousin Pem. I was laughing to myself all the time, for I guessed who Dan Dolan was. I knew he was at St. Andrew's. His dear old Aunt Winnie is one of my truest friends."

"O Marraine, Marraine!" murmured Polly, eagerly. "And—and you don't mind it if—"

"If she is with the Little Sisters of the Poor, Pollykins? Not a bit! Some day I may be there myself. Now that this tempest in a teapot is over, you can all go off and finish your games. I am going to sit under this nice old tree and talk to Miss Winnie's boy."

And while dad, still a little hot at the trouble that had marred Polly's party, started the fun in another direction, Miss

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Stella gathered her silvery gown around her and sat down on the rustic bench beneath the old cedar, and talked to Dan. He learned how Aunt Winnie had sewed patiently and skilfully for this lovely lady a dozen years ago, when she was spending a gay season in his own town; and how the gentle old seamstress, with her simple faith and tender sympathy, her wise warnings to the gay, motherless girl, had won a place in her heart.

"I tried to coax her home with me," said Miss Stella, "to make it 'home,' as I felt she could; but Baby Danny was in the way,—the little Danny that she could not leave."

Then Dan, in his turn, told about Killykinick, and how he had been sent there for the summer and had met little Polly.

"I should have told," he said, lifting Aunt Winnie's own blue Irish eyes to Miss Stella's face,—“I should have said right out straight and square that I wasn't Polly's kind, and had no right to push in here with grand folks like hers. But it was all so fine it sort of turned my head.”

"It will do that," replied Miss Stella, softly. "It has turned mine often, Danny."

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But now we both see straight and clear again, and I am going to make things straight and clear with all the others."

"You can't," said Dan,—“not with those grand ladies in gold spectacles; not with Polly's dad; maybe not with Polly herself. I'm all mixed up, and out of line with them. And—and—” (Dan took the silken guard from his neck) “I want you to give them back this gold watch, and tell them so.” (He slipped the Jack Horner prize into Miss Stella's hand.) “I'm not asking anything and I'm not taking anything that comes to me like this. And—and—” (he rose and stood under the crooked tree in all his straight, sturdy strength) “Neb is down at the wharf with a load of clams. We passed him as we came up. I'm not pushing in among the silk cushions any more. I'm going home with him.”

Which, with Miss Stella's sympathetic approval, he did at once.

When a little later the guests had all gone, and “The Polly” was taking her white-winged way back to Killykinick with Dud, Jim, and Freddy; when the jewelled lights had gone out, and the party was

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over, and all was quiet on the starlit porch, Miss Stella returned Dan's watch and gave his message. Even the two grandmamas, being really grandmamas at heart, softened to it, and dad declared gruffly it had been a fool business altogether, while Polly flung herself sobbing into her godmother's arms.

"O Dan,—poor Dan! He is the nicest boy I ever saw,—the nicest and the kindest, Marraine! And now—now he will never come back here any more!"

"I don't think he will, Pollykins," was the low answer. "You see" (Marraine dropped a light kiss on the nestling curls), "he was a newsboy and a bootblack, and he does not deny it; while you—you, Pollykins—"

"Oh, I don't care what he was!" interrupted Miss Polly, tempestuously,—
"I don't care what he was. I took him for my real true friend, and I am not going to give up Dan as I gave up Meg Murray, Marraine." Polly tightened her clasp around Miss Stella's neck so she could whisper softly in her ear: "If he won't come back, you and I will go after him; won't we, Marraine?"

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Meanwhile, with his head pillowed on a pile of fish nets—very different, we must confess, from the silken cushions of dad's pretty yacht,—and with old Neb drowsily watching her ragged sail, Dan was back again in his own line, beneath the guiding stars. It was a calm, beautiful night, and those stars were at their brightest. Even Neb's dull wits seemed to kindle under their radiance.

"You can steer 'most anywhere when they shine like that. Don't want none of these 'ere winking, blinking lights to show you the way," he said.

"But the trouble is they don't always shine," answered Dan.

"No," said Neb, slowly, "they don't; that's a fact. But they ain't ever really out, like menfolk's lights. The stars is always thar."

"Always there,"—yes, Dan realized, as, with his head on the dank, fishy pillow, he looked up in the glory above him, the stars were always there. Blurred sometimes by earthly mists and vapors, lost in the dazzling gleam of jewelled lights, darkened by the shadows of crooked trees, they shone with pure, steadfast, guiding

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rays,—the stars that were always there. A witching little Will-o'-the-wisp had bewildered Dan into strange ways this evening; but he was back again in his own straight honest line beneath the stars.

On "The Polly," making her way over the starlit water to Killykinick, things were not so pleasant.

"It was a mean, dirty trick to give Dan away. I don't care who did it!" said big-hearted Jim, roused into spirit and speech.

"It wasn't I,—oh, indeed it wasn't I!" declared Freddy. "I told Tad Dan was the biggest, strongest, finest fellow in the whole bunch. I never said a word about his being a newsboy or a bootblack, though I don't think it hurts him a bit."

"And it doesn't," said Jim, whose blood had been a "true blue" stream before the Stars and Stripes began to wave. "But there are some fools that think so."

"Calling me fool, are you?" said Dud, fiercely.

"No, I didn't," retorted Jim. "But if the name fits you, take it. I don't object." And he turned away, with a flash in his eyes most unusual for Sunny Jim,—a flash that Dud did not venture to kindle into angry fire. [211]

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But, though the storm blew over, as such springtime storms will, Dan had learned a lesson, and felt that he never again wished to venture on the dizzy heights where wise heads turn and strong feet falter. Though Dud and Jim, who both had pocket money in plenty, made arrangements at the Boat Club for the use of a little motor boat several times a week, Dan held to his own line as second mate at Killykinick, and was contented to share old Neb's voyaging. They went out often now; for, under the old sailor's guidance, Dan was becoming an expert fisherman. And soon the dingy boat, loaded with its silvery spoil, became known to camps and cottages along the other shores. Poor old Neb was too dull-witted for business; but customers far from markets watched eagerly for the merry blue-eyed boy who brought fish, "still kicking," for their early breakfast,—clams, crabs, and lobsters, whose freshness was beyond dispute. Neb's old leather wallet began to fill up as it had never been filled before. And the dinners that were served on the "Lady Jane," the broiled, the baked, the fried fish dished up in rich plenty every

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day, shook Brother Bart's allegiance to Irish stews, and, as he declared, "would make it aisy for a heretic to keep the Friday fast forever."

Then, Dan had the garden to dig and weed, the cow to milk, the chickens to feed,—altogether, the days were most busy and pleasant; and it was a happy, if tired, boy that tumbled at night into his hammock swung beneath the stars, while old Jeb and Neb smoked their pipes on the deck beside him.

Three letters had come from Aunt Winnie,—a Government boat brought weekly mail to the lighthouse on Numskull Nob. They were prim little letters, carefully margined and written, and spelled as the good Sisters had taught her in early youth. She took her pen in hand—so letters had always begun in Aunt Winnie's schooldays—to write him a few lines. She was in good health and hoped he was the same, though many were sick at the Home, and Mrs. McGraw (whom Dan recalled as the dozing lady of his visit) had died 'very sudden on Tuesday; but she had a priest at the last, and a Requiem Mass in the chapel, with the

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altar in black, and everything most beautiful. Poor Miss Flannery's cough was bad, and she wouldn't be long here, either; but, as the good Mother says, we are blessed in having a holy place where we can die in peace and quiet. And Aunt Winnie's own leg was bad still, but she thanked God she could get around a bit and help the others. And, though she might never see him again—for she would be turned on seventy next Thursday,—she prayed for her dear boy nights, and dreamed of him constant. And, begging God to bless him and keep him from harm, she was his affectionate aunt, Winnie Curley.'

The other letters were very much in the same tone: some other old lady was dying or failing fast; for, with all its twilight peace, Aunt Winnie was in a valley of the shadow, where the light of youth and hope and cheer that whistling, laughing Dan brought into Mulligans' attic could not shine.

"I've got to get her home," resolved Dan, who was keen enough to read this loss and longing between the old-fashioned neatly-written lines. "It's Pete Patterson

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and the meat shop for me in the fall and good-bye to St Andrew's and 'pipe dreams' forever! Aunt Winnie has to come back, with her blue teapot on her own stove and Tabby purring at her feet again or—or" (Dan choked at the thought) "they'll be having a funeral Mass at the Little Sisters for her."

And Dan lay awake a long time that night looking at the stars, and stifling a dull pang in his young heart that the heights of which he had dreamed were not for him. But he was up betimes next morning, his own sturdy self again. Old Neb had a bad attack of rheumatism that made his usual early trip impossible.

"They will be looking for us," said Dan. "I promised those college girls camping at Shelter Cove to bring them fresh fish for breakfast."

"Let them catch for themselves!" growled old Neb, who was rubbing his stiffened arm with whale oil.

"Girls!" said Dan in boyish scorn. "What do girls know about fishing? They squeal every time they get a bite. I'll take Freddy to watch the lines (Brother Bart isn't so scary about him now), and go myself." [215]

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XIX.—A MORNING VENTURE.

AFTER some persuasion from Captain Jeb, who declared he could trust matey Dan's navigation now against any wind and tide, Brother Bart consented to Freddy's morning sail with his sturdy chum.

"Sure I know Dan loves laddie better than his own life," said the good old man anxiously, as he watched Neb's ragged sail flitting off with the two young fishermen. "But it's only a boy he is, after all."

"Mebbe," said Captain Jeb, briefly. "But thar's boys wuth half a dozen good-sized men, and matey is that kind. You needn't scare about any little chap that ships with him. And what's to hurt him, anyhow, Padre? You've got to let all young critters try their legs and wings."

And Freddy was trying his triumphantly this morning. It was one of Dan's lucky days, and the lines were drawn in again and again, until the college girls' breakfast and many more silvery shiners were fluttering and gasping in old Neb's fish basket. Then Dan proceeded to deliver

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his wares at neighborly island shores, where summer campers were taking brief holidays. Some of these islands, more sheltered than Killykinick, were fringed with a tick growth of hardy evergreens, hollowed into coves and inlets, where the waves, broken in their wild, free sweep, lapped low-shelving shores and invited gentle adventure.

On one of these pleasant outposts was the college camp; and half a dozen pretty girl graduates, in "middies" and khaki skirts, came down to meet Dan. One of them led a big, tawny dog, who made a sudden break for the boat, nearly overturning Freddy in his leap, and crouching by Dan's side, whining and shivering.

"Oh, he's yours! We said he was yours!" went up the girlish chorus. "Then take him away, please. And don't let him come back; for he howled all night, and nearly set us crazy. Nellie Morris says dogs never howl that way unless somebody is dead or dying; and she left her mother sick, and is almost frantic. Please take him away, and don't ever bring him near us again!"

"But—but he isn't mine at all," replied

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Dan, staring at the big dog, who, shivering and wretched as he seemed, awoke some vague memory.

"Then whose is he?" asked a pretty sopkesman, severely. "He could not have dropped from the clouds, and yours was the only boat that came here yesterday."

"Oh, I know,—I know, Dan!" broke in Freddy, eagerly. "He belongs to that big man who came with us on the steam-boat. He had two dogs in leashes, and this is one of them, I know, because I saw this brown spot on his head when I gave him a cracker."

"Mr. Wirt?" Dan's vague memory leaped into vivid light: Mr. John Wirt's big, tawny dog indeed, who perhaps, with some dim dog-sense, remembered Freddy. "I do know him now," said Dan. "He belongs to a gentleman named Wirt—"

"Well, take him where he belongs," interrupted the young lady. "We don't care where it is. We simply can't have him howling here."

"Oh, take him, Dan!" said Freddy. "Let us take him home with us."

"Mr. Wirt must be around somewhere,"

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reflected Dan. "He said perhaps he would come to Killykinick. We'll take him," he agreed cheerfully, as he handed out his basket of fish to the pretty, young campers. "And I think his master will come along to look him up."

And the boys started on their homeward way, with Rex (which was the name on their new companion's collar) seated between them, still restless and quivering, in spite of all Freddy's efforts to make friends.

"He wasn't this way on the boat," said Freddy as, after all his stroking and soothing, Rex only lifted his head and emitted a long, mournful howl. "I went down on the lower deck where the big man had left his dogs, and they played with me fine,—shook paws and wagged their tails and were real nice."

"I guess he knows he is lost and wants to get back to his master," said Dan. "Dogs have a lot of sense generally, so what took him over to that girls' camp puzzles me."

"He didn't like the girls,—did you, Rex?" asked Freddy, as he patted his new friend's nose. "My, he is a beauty,—

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isn't he, Dan? Just the kind of a dog I'd like to have; and, if nobody comes for him, he will be ours for keeps. Do you think Brother Andrew will let us have him out in the stable at St. Andrew's? Dick Walton kept his rabbits there—"

"Until a weasel came and gobbled them up," laughed Dan, as he steered away from a line of rocks that jutted out like sharp teeth from a low-lying, heavily wooded shore.

"They couldn't gobble Rex,—could they, old fellow!" said Freddy, with another friendly pat.

But, regardless of all these kindly overtures, Rex sprang to his feet, barked in wild excitement for a moment, made a plunge from the boat and struck out for the shore.

"Oh, he's gone,—he's gone!" cried Freddy, desperately.

"Rex! Rex!" called Dan. "There's nothing or nobody there. Come back,—come back! Well, he must be a durned fool of a dog to be jumping off at every island he sees.—Rex! Rex!—He'll starve to death if we leave him here."

"Oh, he will,—he will!" said Freddy,

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wofully. "Come back, Rex, old fellow, nice dog,—come back!"

Freddy whistled and called in vain: Rex had vanished into the thick undergrowth.

"Oh, let's go for him,—let's go for him, Dan!" pleaded Freddy. "Maybe he is after a wild duck or something. We ought not to let a fine dog like that get lost and starve to death. One of the deck hands on the steamboat told me those dogs were worth a hundred dollars a piece, and that they had more sense than some humans."

"Well, he isn't showing it this morning, sure; and he didn't yesterday either," said Dan, gruffly. "He isn't the kind of dog to leave around here for any tramp to pick up, I'll agree; but how are we to haul him back, unless he chooses to come? And I know nothing about this shore anyhow. Neb told me they called it Last Island, and there was once a light here that the old whalers could see fifty miles out—why, halloo!" Dan paused in his survey of the doubtful situation. "He's coming back!"

"Rex! Rex!" shouted Freddy, gleefully; for it was Rex indeed,—Rex coming

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through the dense low growth, in long leaps, with quick, sharp barks that were like calls; Rex plunging into the water and swimming with swift strokes to the waiting boat; but Rex refusing absolutely to be pulled aboard. He only splashed and shook himself, scattering a very geyser of salt water on the tugging boys, and barked louder and sharper still as if he were doing his best to talk.

"Jing!" exclaimed Dan, giving up all efforts to manage him. "I never saw such a durned chump of a dog! I'm wet to the skin."

"Oh, he wants something!" said softer-hearted Freddy. "He is trying to tell us something, Dan."

Rex barked again, as if he had heard the words; and, leaping on the edge of the boat, he caught Freddy's khaki sleeve.

"Lookout there, or he'll pull you overboard!" shouted Dan in fierce alarm, as Rex pulled still harder. "Golly! I believe he wants us to come ashore with him."

"Oh, he does,—he does!" said Freddy, eagerly. "He has hunted something down and wants us to get it, Dan. Let us see what it is."

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It was a temptation that two live boys could not resist. Mooring Neb's old fishing boat to a sharp projecting rock, they proceeded to wade where it would have been impossible to navigate; Rex leaping before them, barking jubilantly now, as if he had won his point.

"You stand back, kid!" (Through all the excitement of a discoverer, Dan did not lose sight of his responsibilities.) "Let me go ahead, so if there is anything to hurt I'll strike it first. Straight behind in my steps, and lookout for suck-holes!"

And, with Rex leading, they proceeded Indian file over the narrow strip of sand that shelved to the sea, and then on through thicket and brambles that hedged the shore in wild, luxuriant growth, until suddenly the ruins of the old lighthouse rose out of the tangle before them. The shaft that had upheld the beacon light was all gone save the iron framework, which rose bare and rusted above the little stone cabin that had sheltered the keeper of long ago, and that still stood amid crumbling stones and fallen timbers.

"Back, Freddy,—back!" shouted Dan,

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as something big and fierce bolted out of the ruins. "Why, it's the other dog!" he added in relief. "Mr. Wirt *must* be somewhere around."

And, peering into the open door of the cabin, he stood dumb with dismay; for there indeed, stretched upon the rotten floor under the broken roof, was his friend of the steamboat. His gun was beside him, his head pillowed on his knapsack, his eyes closed, all his pride and strength and manly bearing gone; only the short, hard breathing showed that he was still alive.

"Golly!" gasped Freddy, who had crept in behind his chum. "Is—is he dead, Dan?"

"Not—not—yet, but he looks mighty close to it. Mr. Wirt—" he faltered, bending over the prostrate form; "Mr. Wirt!" he repeated louder. There was no answer. "I'm afraid he's gone," said Dan, in an awe-struck voice; and Freddy burst into boyish tears.

"What are you crying about?" asked Dan, gruffly.

"Oh, I don't know,—I don't know!" was the trembling answer. "I—I never

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saw anybody dead before. What—what do you think killed him, Dan?”

“Nothing. He isn’t killed,” replied Dan, who had been taking close observations. “He is still breathing. I guess he came here to hunt and got sick, and that’s what the dog was trying to tell people. Gosh, it’s a pity dogs like that can’t talk!”

“Oh, it is,—it is!” murmured Freddy, putting his arm around Rex, who, his duty done, was seated on his hind legs, gravely surveying his master.

The sick man moved a little, and groaned feebly: “Water!” The word came faintly through parched lips. “Water,—a little—water!”

Dan picked up a can that had evidently done duty before.

“Stay by him, Freddy, so he’ll know there is somebody here. I’ll go to get some water. They must have had a pump or well around a place like this.”

And while Dan discovered the broken, half-choked cistern at the back of the Old Light, Freddy watched the sick man. He had never before seen any one very sick, and it took some pluck to keep his post.

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especially when Mr. Wirt suddenly opened his eyes and looked at him. It was such a strange, wild, questioning look that Freddy felt his heart nearly leap into his throat.

Then Dan came back with the can full of water, and together they did their best for their patient,—bathing his head, wetting his parched lips, laving the helpless hands that were burning with fever, until the bright, sunken eyes closed and the sick man sank into a fitful sleep.

“He is pretty badly off,” said Dan, who had seen pain and sickness and death, and knew. “He ought to have a doctor right away, and it’s for us to get one quick as we can. But it will be a good three hours’ job; and” (Aunt Winnie’s boy’s voice softened) “I hate to leave the poor fellow here without any one to give him a drop of water, when he’s burning up like this. But you can’t sail the boat alone, kid.”

“No, I can’t,” faltered Freddy,—“I can’t sail the boat, Dan; but—but” (the young voice steadied bravely) “I can stay here with him.”

“You can!” echoed Dan, staring at his little chum in amazement. “You’d scare

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to death, kid, here all alone with a dying man. He is likely to go off any minute."

"Maybe," faltered Freddy. "But—but I'd stay by him all the same, Dan. I can bathe his head and his hands, and give him water to drink, and say prayers like Brother Bart says we must when people are dying. O Dan, we can't leave him here to die alone!"

"No, we can't," said Dan, heartily. "I'd never think of asking a kid like you to stay. But, with the two dogs on the watch, there's nothing to fear. And you are doing the real right and plucky thing, for sure. I'll sail over to Killykinick and see if I can get Jim or Dud off for the nearest doctor, and be back here as quick as I can. And you, kid" (Dan's tone softened tenderly to his little chum), "don't scare more than you can help. Stick it out here as best you can."

Dan was off at the words, and for a moment Freddy felt his heart sink within him. He looked at the broken walls, the gaping roof, the dying man, and his blood chilled at the thought of the long hours before any one could return to him. Standing at the door of the Old Light, his

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eyes followed Dan's sturdy figure leaping swiftly through the bramble bush, and now he had reached the boat and put off.

Freddy was left indeed. He gulped down a big lump that rose in his throat, and, with the can of water Dan had freshly filled for him, took his seat at this patient's side. Rex came up and put a cold nose on his knee, and Freddy's watch began.

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XX.—LITTLE BOY BLUE.

MR. WIRT lay very still. Freddy never remembered seeing any one quite so still before. Even his breathing had grown quiet, and the rise and fall of the broad breast was the only sign of life in the otherwise motionless figure. All around him was very still, too. Freddy could hear the plash of the waves on the beach, the rustle of the wind through the dwarf trees, the whir of wings as some sea bird took its swift flight above the broken roof. But within there was a solemn hush, that to the small watcher seemed quite appalling.

Roy, as the other dog was named on his collar, dozed at his master's feet. Rex kept his place at Freddy's side, as if conscious of his responsibilities; and, for a time that seemed quite interminable, all were silent. Freddy found himself studying the big man's pale face with fearsome interest. How very pale it was! And the rough growth of beard that hid mouth and chin made it seem paler still. But the nose was straight and

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smooth as Freddy's own. The silver-streaked hair fell in soft waves over a broad handsome brow. And there was a white scar on the left temple, that throbbed with the low breathing. Somehow, that scar held Freddy's eye. Surely he had seen a V shaped scar like it before, where or when he could not think; perhaps on one of the big football players at St. Andrew's.

"Ah, if good Brother Tim were only here now!" thought Freddy hopelessly, as the picture of the spotless stretch of infirmary arose before him. The rows of white beds so safe and soft; the kind old face bending over the fevered pillows; Old Top waving his friendly shadow in the sunlit window; the Angelus chiming from the great bell tower; the merry shouts of the ball players on the green below,—all these memories were in dire contrast to the present scene.

If Dan would only come back! But he wouldn't—he couldn't—for hours. And maybe this big, strange man might die while he was gone,—die with only a little boy beside him,—a little boy to help him, to pray for him. Freddy's thoughts grew

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more and more solemn and awesome. People always prayed by dying beds, he knew. Oh, if Dan would only come with a doctor and perhaps a priest! For Freddy felt that big men who wandered around the world with dogs and guns were likely to need higher spiritual ministrations than a small boy could give. In the meanwhile he would do his best; and, drawing out his silver-mounted rosary, he began to say his beads.

And perhaps, as the young watcher had been an early riser this morning, he was nodding a little over his decades when a sudden movement of his patient roused him. Mr. Wirt was awake, his eyes fixed steadily on Freddy's face.

"Still here," he murmured,— "still here? Boy,—little boy! Are you real or a death dream?"

It was a startling question; but Freddy had learned something of fever vagaries during the measles, when even some of the Seniors had lost their heads.

"Oh, I'm real!" he answered cheerfully. "I'm a real boy all right. I'm Freddy Neville, from St. Andrew's College—"

"My God!" burst in a low cry from the pale lips.

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"Yes," said Freddy. "It's time for you to say that,—to say your prayers, I mean; because—because—you're very sick, and when people are very sick, you know, they—sometimes they die."

"Die!" was the hoarse echo. "Aye, die as I have lived,—in darkness, despair! Lost—lost—lost!"

"Oh, no, no, no!" Boy as he was, Freddy felt his young heart thrill at the cry. "You're not lost yet. You're never lost while you live. You can always say an act of contrition, you know, and—and—" Freddy's voice faltered, for the rôle of spiritual adviser was a new one; but he had not gone through the big Catechism last year without learning a young Catholic Christian's obligations. "Would—would you like me to say an act of contrition for you?" he asked.

There was no answer save in the strange softening of the eyes fixed upon the boyish face. And, feeling that his patient was too far gone for speech, Freddy dropped on his knees, and in a sweet, trembling tone repeated the brief, blessed words of sorrow for sin, the plea for pardon, the promise of amendment. It had been a

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long, long time since those familiar words had fallen on his listener's ears; a longer time since they had reached his heart. For years he had believed nothing, hoped nothing, feared nothing. Life had been to him a dull blank, broken only by reckless adventure; death, the end of all. But for three days and nights he had lain helpless, fever-smitten, stricken down in all his proud strength in this wilderness, with no friends but his dogs, no home but the ruined hut into which he had crawled for shelter, no human aid within reach or call. The derelict, as he had called himself to Dan, had drifted on the rocks beyond hope and help, as derelicts must. And in those three days and nights he had realized that for him there was no light in sea or sky,—that all was darkness forever.

And then young voices had broken in upon the black silence; and, opening his eyes, closed on hideous fever dreams, he had seen Freddy,—Freddy, who was not a dream; Freddy, who was kneeling by his side, whispering sweet, forgotten words of peace and hope and pardon; Freddy—Freddy—he could not speak, there was

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such a stirring in the depths of his heart and soul. He could only stretch out his weak, trembling hand, that Freddy met with a warm, boyish grip.

“Oh, I’m here yet!” he said, thinking his patient needed the reassurance. “I’m staying here right by you, to say prayers, or get water or anything you want. Dan left me here to take care of you. He has gone for the doctor; and if you just hold on till they get here, why, maybe—maybe—they’ll pull you through all right. Gee whilikins!” exclaimed Freddy, as the sick man suddenly started up from his rude pillow. “You musn’t do that!”

“I must—I must!” was the hoarse reply; and Freddy was caught in a wild, passionate clasp to his patient’s heart. “Dying or living, I must claim you, hold you, my boy,—my own little son,—little Boy Blue!” The voice sank to a low, trembling whisper. “Little Boy Blue, don’t you know your own daddy?”

And Freddy, who had been struggling wildly in what he believed to be a delirious grasp, suddenly grew still. “Little Boy Blue,”—it was the nursery name of long ago,—the name that only the dad of those

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days knew,—the name that even Brother Bart had never heard. It brought back blazing fire, and cushioned rocker, and the clasp of strong arms around his little white-robed form, and a deep, merry voice in his baby ear: “Little Boy Blue.”

Freddy lifted a frightened, bewildered little face. The eyes,—softened now with brimming tears; the straight nose like his own, the waving hair, the scar he had so often pressed with baby fingers,—ah, he remembered,—little Boy Blue remembered! It was as if a curtain were snatched from a far past that had been only dimly outlined until now.

“My daddy,—my daddy,—my own dear daddy!” he cried, flinging his arms about the sick man’s neck. “Oh, don’t die,—don’t die!”

For, weak and exhausted by his outburst of emotion, the father had fallen back upon his pillow, gasping for breath, the sweat standing out in great beads on his brow, his hand clutching Freddy’s own in what seemed a death clasp.

And now Freddy prayed indeed,—prayed as never in all his young life he had prayed before,—prayed from the

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depths of his tender, innocent heart, in words all his own.

"O God, Father in heaven, spare my dear daddy! He has been lost so long! Oh, do not let me lose him again! Save him for his little boy,—save him, spare him!"

Without, the sky had darkened, the wind moaned, the waves swelled white-capped against the low shore. The August storm was rising against Last Island in swift wrath; but, wrestling in passionate fervor for the life that had suddenly become so precious to him, Freddy did not hear or heed. The dogs started out into the open. Father and son were alone in the gathering gloom.

Through what he believed the throes of his death agony, the sick man caught the sweet, faltering words: "O dear Lord, have mercy on my dear father! Let him live, and we will bless and thank You all the rest of our lives. He has been lost so long, but now he has come back. Oh, try to say it with me, daddy: you have come back to be good,—to live good and live right forever!"

And then, even while Freddy prayed, the storm burst upon Last Island. And

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such a storm! It seemed as if the derelict lying there had roused wind and wave into destructive fury against the friendly outpost that sheltered him. Last Island had been abandoned on account of its perilous exposure; and its beacon light, shattered again and again by fierce ocean gales, was transferred to a safer shore.

"It's a-washing away fast," old Neb had informed Dan when they had drifted by the low-lying shore. "Some of these days a big storm will gulp it down for good."

And truly the roaring sea seemed to rush upon it in hungry rage to-day. The dogs came in crouching and whining to their master; while the wind shrieked and whistled, and the foaming breakers thundered higher and higher upon the unprotected shore.

"O Dan, Dan!" thought Freddy hopelessly, as the storm beat through the broken walls and roof. "Dan will never get here now,—never!"

But, though his heart was quailing within him, Brother Bart's laddie was no weakling: he stood bravely to his post, bathing his father's head and hands, wetting the dry, muttering lips, soothing

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him with tender words and soft caresses,—
“daddy, my own dear daddy, it is your
little boy that is with you,—your own
little Boy Blue! You will be better soon,
daddy.” And then through the roar and
rage of the storm would rise the boyish
voice pleading to God for help and mercy.

And the innocent prayer seemed to
prevail. The sick man’s labored breathing
grew easier, the drawn features relaxed,
the blood came into the livid lips; and,
with the long-drawn sigh of one exhausted
by his struggle for life, Freddy’s patient
sank into a heavy sleep; while his little
Boy Blue watched on, through terrors
that would have tried stronger souls than
Brother Bart’s laddie. For all the powers
of earth and air and sea seemed loosened
for battle. The winds rose into madder
fury; the rain swept down in blinding
floods; forked tongues of fire leaped from
the black clouds that thundered back to
the rolling waves.

The dogs crouched, whimpering and
shivering, at Freddy’s side. Whether
daddy was alive or dead he could not tell.
He could only keep close to him, trembling
and praying, and feeling that all this horror

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of darkness could not be real: that he would waken in a moment,—waken as he had sometimes wakened at St. Andrew's, with Brother Bart's kind voice in his ear telling him it was all a dream,—an awful dream.

And then blaze and crash and roar would send poor little Boy Blue shivering to his knees, realizing that it was all true: that he was indeed here on this far-off ocean isle, beyond all help and reach of man, with daddy dying,—dead beside him. He had closed the door as best he could with its rusted bolt; but the wind kept tearing at it madly, shaking the rotten timbers until they suddenly gave way, with rattle and crash that were too much for the brave little watcher's nerves. He flung his arms about his father in horror he could no longer control.

“Daddy, daddy!” he cried desperately. “Wake up,—wake up! Daddy, speak to me and tell me you're not dead!”

And daddy started into consciousness at the piteous cry, to find his little Boy Blue clinging to him in wild affright, while wind and wave burst into their wretched shelter,—wind and wave! Surging, foam-

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ing, sweeping over beach and bramble and briar growth that guarded the low shore, rising higher and higher each moment before the furious goad of the gale, came the white-capped breakers!

"Oh, the water is coming in on us! Poor daddy, poor daddy, you'll get wet!"

And then daddy, wild wanderer that he had been over sea and land, roused to the peril, his dulled brain quickening into life.

"The gun,—my gun!" he said hoarsely. "It is loaded, Freddy. Lift it up here within reach of my hand."

"O daddy, daddy, what are you going to do?" cried Freddy in new alarm.

"Shoot,—shoot! Signal for help. There is a life-saving station not far away. There, hold the gun closer now,—closer!"

And the trembling hand pulled the trigger, and its sharp call for help went out again and again into the storm.

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XXI.—A DARK HOUR.

MEANTIME Dan had set his dingy sail to what he felt was a changing wind, and started Neb's fishing boat on the straightest line he could make for Killykinick. But it had taken a great deal of tacking and beating to keep to his course. He was not yet sailor enough to know that the bank of cloud lying low in the far horizon meant a storm; but the breeze that now filled and now flapped his sail was as full of pranks as a naughty boy. In all his experience as second mate, Dan had never before met so trying a breeze; and it was growing fresher and stronger and more trying every minute. To beat back to Beach Cliff against its vagaries, our young navigator felt would be beyond his skill. The only thing he could do was to take the shorter course of about three miles to Killykinick, and send off Jim and Dud in their rented boat (which had a motor) for a doctor. Then he could explain Freddy's absence to Brother Bart, and hurry back to his little chum.

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Wind and tide, however, were both against these well-laid plans to-day. The wind was bad enough, but now even the waves seemed to have a strange swell, different from the measured rise and fall he knew. It was as if their far-off depths were rising, stirring out of their usual calm. They no longer tossed their snowy crests in the summer sunlight, but surged and swayed in low, broken lines, white-capped with fitful foam. And the voice—the song of the sea—that had been a very lullaby to Dan as he swung every night in his hammock beneath the stars, had a hoarse, fierce tone, like a sob of passion or pain. Altogether, Dan and his boat had a very hard pull over the three miles to Killykinick.

“Thar they come!” said Captain Jeb, who, with Brother Bart, was watching from the beach. “I told you you could count on Mate Dan, Padre. Thar the lads come, safe and sound; though they hed a pull against the wind, I bet. But here they come all right.”

“God be thanked for that same!” said Brother Bart, reverently. “My heart has been nearly leaping out of my breast this

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last half hour. And you weren't over-easy about them yourself, as I could see, Jeroboam."

"Wall, I'm glad to see the younkers safe back, I must say," agreed Captain Jeb, in frank relief. "Thar was nothing to skeer about when they started this morning, but that bank of cloud wasn't in sight then. My, but it come up sudden! It fairly took my breath when Neb pointed it out to me. That ar marline spike didn't hurt his weather eye. 'Hurricane,' he says to me; 'straight up from the West Indies, and them boys is out!' I tell you it did give me a turn—aye, aye matey!" as Dan came hurrying up the beach. "Ye made it all right again wind an' tide—but where's the other?"

"Laddie,—my laddie!" cried Brother Bart, his ruddy face paling. "Speak up, Dan Dolan! Has harm come to him?"

"No, no, no!" answered Dan, eagerly,—
"no harm at all, Brother Bart. He is safe and sound. Don't scare, Brother Bart." And then as briefly as he could Dan told the adventure of the morning.

"And you left laddie, that lone innocent, with a dying man?" said Brother Bart.

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"Sure it will frighten the life out of him!"

"No, it won't," replied Dan. "Freddy isn't the baby you think, Brother Bart. He's got lots of sand. He was ready and willing to stay. We couldn't leave the poor man there alone with the dogs."

"Sure you couldn't,—you couldn't," said the good Brother, his tone softening. "But laddie—little laddie,—that never saw sickness or death! Send off the other boys for the doctor, Jeroboam, and the priest as well, while Dan and I go back for laddie."

But Captain Jeroboam, who was watching the horizon with a wide-awake weather eye, shook his head.

"You can't, Padre,—you can't! Not even the 'Lady Jane' could make it agin what's coming on now. If the boy is on dry land, you'll have to trust him to the Lord."

"Oh, no, no!" answered the good Brother, forgetting what he said, in his solicitude. "I'll go for him myself. Give us your boat, man, and Dan and I will go for laddie."

"Ye can't, I tell ye!" and the old sailor's voice took a sudden tone of com-

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mand. "I'm captain of this here Killykinick, Padre; and no boat leaves this shore in the face of such a storm, for it would mean death to every man aboard her,—sure and certain death."

"The Lord have mercy,—the Lord have mercy!" cried Brother Bart. "My laddie,—my poor little laddie! The fright of this will kill him entirely. Oh, but you're the hard man, Jeroboam! You have no heart!"

"Back!" shouted Captain Jeb, heedless of the good old man's reproaches, as a whistling sound came over the white-capped waves. "Back, under cover, all of ye. The storm is on us now!"

And, fairly dragging Brother Bart, while Neb and Dan hurried behind them, the Captain made for shelter in the old ship under the cliffs, where Dud and Jim had already found refuge.

"Down with the hatches! Brace everything!" came the trumpet tones of command of the old sailor over the roar of the wind. And doors and portholes shut, the heavy bolts of iron and timber fell into place, and everything was made tight and fast against the storm that now burst in all its fury on Killykinick,—a storm

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that sent Brother Bart down on his knees in prayer, and held the boys speechless and almost breathless with terror. In the awful blackness that fell upon them they could scarcely see one another. The "Lady Jane" shook from stem to stern as if she were being torn from her fifty years' mooring. The stout awnings were ripped from the upper deck; their posts snapped like reeds in the gale; the great hollows of the Devil's Jaw thundered back the roar of the breakers that filled their cavernous depths with mad turmoil. On land, on sea, in sky, all was battle,—such battle as even Captain Jeb agreed he had never seen on Killykinick before.

"I've faced many a hurricane, but never nothing as bad as this. If it wasn't for them cliffs behind us and the stretch of reef before, durned if we wouldn't be washed clean off the face of the earth!"

"Laddie, laddie!" was the cry that blended with Brother Bart's prayers for mercy. "God in heaven, take care of my poor laddie through this! I ought not to have let him out of my sight."

"But he's safe, Brother Bart," said Dan, striving to comfort himself with

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the thought. "He is on land, you know, just as we are; and the old lighthouse is as strong as the 'Lady Jane'; and God can take care of him anywhere."

"Sure He can, lad,—He can. I'm the weak old sinner to doubt and fear," was the broken answer. "But he's only a bit of a boy, my own little laddie,—only a wee bit of a boy, that never saw trouble or danger in his life. To be facing this beside a dying man,—ah, God have mercy on him, poor laddie!"

So, amid fears and doubts and prayers, the wild hours of the storm and darkness passed; the fierce hurricane, somewhat shorn of its first tropic strength, swept on its northward way; the shriek of the wind sank into moan and murmur; the sea fell back, like a passion-weary giant; the clouds broke and scattered, and a glorious rainbow arched the clearing sky.

The bolts and bars that had done such good duty were lifted, and the crew of the "Lady Jane" went out to reconnoitre a very damaged domain. Cow-house and chicken-house were roofless. Brown Betty lay crouching fearful in the ruins, while her feathered neighbors fluttered homeless

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in the hollows of the rocks. The beans and peas and corn,—all things that had lifted their green growth too proudly, were crushed to the earth. But far worse than this was the havoc wrought on the beach. One half of the wharf was down. The small boats, torn from their moorings, had disappeared entirely. The motor boat Jim and Dud had hired for the season was stove in upon the rocks. The “Sary Ann,” stranded upon the shoals of Numskull Nob, to which she had been swept by the gale, lay without mast or rudder, leaking at every joint.

The two old salts surveyed the scene for a moment in stoic silence, realizing all it meant to them. But Brother Bart, with the sunlight dancing on the waves, the rainbow arching the sky, broke into eager, hopeful speech.

“God be thanked it’s over and we’re all alive to tell it; for Noah’s deluge itself couldn’t have been worse. And now, Jeroboam, we’ll be going over after laddie; and the Lord grant that we may find him safe as the rest!”

“We’ll be going after him!” repeated Captain Jeb, grimly. “How and whar?”

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"Sure—can't we right one of the boats?" asked the old man, anxiously.

"Which boat," was the gruff question. "That thar play toy" (surveying the motor boat) "is smashed in like an egg-shell. Whar the other has been swept to nobody knows. And the 'Sary Ann' has done her best, as we all can see; but no boat could hold her own agin that storm. Do you think she will stand till morning, Neb?"

Neb rolled his dull eyes over reef and shoal.

"She moight," he replied briefly. "Struck pretty bad thar in the bow; but the wind is down now and the tide is low."

"And she is oak-keeled and copper-braced from stem to stern," continued Captain Jeb. "She may stick it out until we can get thar and tow her in. As for the boy, Padre, we can't reach him no more'n we can reach the 'Sary Ann' without a boat; and thar's nothing left that will float around this Killykinick."

"Ah, the Lord have mercy! And are we to leave laddie in that wild place beyond all night?" cried Brother Bart. "Scatter, boys,—scatter all over the place,

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and maybe you can find a boat caught in the rocks and sands; for we must get to the laddie afore the night comes on, cost what it may. Scatter and strive to find a boat!"

While the boys scattered eagerly enough Captain Jeb, making a spyglass of his hands, was scanning the horizon with a sailor's practised eye.

"What is it you see?" asked Brother Bart, anxiously. "Don't tell me it's another storm!"

"No," answered Captain Jeb, slowly, "it ain't another storm. Neb" (his tone grew suddenly sharper and quicker), "step up to the ship and get the old man's glass,—the glass we keep shut up in the case."

Neb, who never shirked an order, obeyed. In a moment he returned with one of the greatest treasures of the "Lady Jane"—Great-uncle Joe's ship-glass that was always kept safe from profaning touch; its clear lenses, that had looked out on sea and sky through many a long voyage, polished to a shine. Captain Jeb adjusted them to his own failing eyes, and gazed seaward for a few moments in silence. Then he said:

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“ ‘Pears as if I couldn’t see clarly after that tarnation blow. You look out, Neb. And, Padre, you’d better step back thar and keep a weather eye on them younkers. It doesn’t do to turn them out too free, with things all broke up.”

“You’re right, man,—you’re right, Jero-boam,” said the good Brother, tremulously. “I’ll keep an eye on them, as you say.”

“Thar,—I’ve got him out of the way!” said Captain Jeb, as Brother Bart hurried back to watch over his scattered flock. “Now, look, Neb,—look steady and straight! Three points to the south of Numskull Nob,—what d’ye see?”

“Nothing at all,” answered Neb.

“Look again!” His brother adjusted the old shipmaster’s glass with a hand that trembled strangely. “Another point to the south. Look steady as ye can, Neb. Yer weather eye was always clarer than mine. What d’ye see now?”

“Nothing,” came the answer again; and then the dull tone quickened: “Aye I do,—I do! Thar’s suthing sticking out of the waves like a broken mast.”

“The Old Light,” said Captain Jeb, hoarsely,—“all that’s left of it. Last

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Island has gone under, as you said it would, Neb,—clean swallowed up. And the boy—” (the speaker gulped down something like a sob). “Looks as if the Padre will never see his little lad agin.”

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XXII.—THE LOST AND FOUND.

THERE had been an extra Mass at the little church at Beach Cliff on the morning of the storm. Father Tom Rayburn, an old classmate of the pastor's, had arrived, and been welcomed most cordially.

"I am off to an old camping ground of mine—Killykinick," he had explained to his host as they sat together at breakfast. "One of our Brothers is there with some of St. Andrew's boys, and my own little nephew is among them."

"Ah, yes, I know!" was the reply. "They come every Sunday to the late Mass. And, by the way, if you are going out into those ocean 'wilds,' you could save a busy man some trouble by stopping at the Life-Saving Station (it's not far out of your way, as I suppose you'll take a sail or a motor boat); and I promised two of those sturdy fellows who are groping for the Truth some reading matter. I thought a friendly talk at the same time would not be amiss. They have little chance for such things in their

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lonely lives. But my duties are quadrupled at this season, as you know."

"And the 'wilderness' is in my line," said Father Tom. "Of course I'll be glad to stop. I used to haunt the Life-Saving Station when I was a boy; and I should like to see it again, especially when I can do a little missionary work on the side," he laughed cheerily.

And so it had happened that while Dan and Freddy were hauling in their lines and delivering breakfasts along the shore, one of the trig motors from the Boat Club was bearing a tall, broad-shouldered passenger, bronzed by sun and storm, to the Life-Saving Station, whose long, low buildings stood on a desolate spit of sand that jutted out into the sea beyond Shelter Cove. It was Uncle Sam's farthest outpost. The Stars and Stripes floating from its flagstaff told of his watchful care of this perilous stretch of shore that his sturdy sons paced by day and night, alert to any cry for help, any sign of danger.

Father Tom, whose own life work lay in some such lines, met the Life-Savers with a warm, cordial sympathy that made

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his visit a most pleasant one. He was ready to listen as well as talk. But Blake and Ford, whom he had come especially to see, were on duty up the shore, and would not be back for more than two hours.

"I'll wait for them," said Father Tom, who never let a wandering sheep, that hook or crook could hold, escape his shepherd's care; and he settled down for a longer chat of his own wild and woolly West, which his hearers, watching with trained eyes the black line in the horizon, were too polite in their own simple way to interrupt. Their guest was in the midst of a description of the Mohave Desert, where he had nearly left his bones to bleach two years ago, when his boatman came hurriedly up with a request of speedy shelter for his little craft.

"There's a storm coming up I daren't face, sir," he said. "We can't make Killykinick until it blows over. You'll have to stay another hour or two here."

"All right, if our good friends will keep us," was the cheery response. "We are not travelling on schedule time."

And then Father Tom looked on with

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keen interest as the sturdy life-savers made ready for the swift-coming tempest that was very soon upon them, bringing Blake and Ford back, breathless and drenched, to report their observations along the beach,—that there was nothing in sight: everything had scudded to shelter. So all gathered in the lookout, whose heavy leaded glass, set in a stone frame, defied the fury of the elements. And, thus sheltered, the group in Uncle Sam's outpost watched the sweep of the storm.

"It's a ripper!" said Blake, translating the more professional opinion of his mates to Father Tom. "But we ain't getting the worst of it here. These West Indianers travel narrow gauge tracks, and we're out of line. Killykinick is catching it bad. Shouldn't wonder if that stranded tub of the old Captain's would keel over altogether."

"You think they are in danger there?" asked Father Tom, anxiously.

"Oh, no! 'Thar's plenty of other shelter. Killykinick is rock-ribbed to stand till the day of doom. But there's another shore not so safe. George! I believe Last Island is going clean under!"

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"Let her go!" came the keeper's bluff response. "Been nothing but a bramble bed these twenty years."

"Bramble bed or not, some fools are camping there," said Blake. "I've seen their dogs on the beach for the last three days; and there was a boat moored to the rocks this morning, and boys scrambling along the shore. The folks that are boxed up in town all winter run wild when they break loose here, and don't care where they go—"

"Hush!" broke in the keeper, suddenly. "Push open the glass there, men, and listen! I think I heard a gun!"

They flung open the window at his word. Borne upon the wild sweep of the wind that rushed in upon them, there came again a sound they all knew,—the signal of distress, the sharp call for help. It was their business to hear and heed.

"A gun sure, and from Last Island!" said the keeper, briefly. "There are fools there, as you say, Blake. Run out the lifeboat, my men! We must get them off. Both boats, for we don't know how many we have to care for."

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"Both boats, sir?" hesitated Blake. "We're short-handed to-day, for Ford has a crippled arm that would be no good in this surf."

"I'll take his place," said Father Tom, eagerly. "I've shot the rapids with my Indian guides many a time. I'll take Ford's place."

"Think twice of it, sir," was Blake's warning. "You are risking your life."

"I know," was the brief answer. "That's my business as well as yours, my friends; so I'll take my chance."

"There talks a man!" said the keeper, heartily. "Give him a sou'wester, and let him take his chances, as he asks, in Ford's place."

And, in briefer time than we can picture, the two lifeboats were swung out of their shelter in the very teeth of the driving gale, and manned by their fearless crews, including Father Tom Rayburn, who, muffled in a huge sou'wester, took his place with the rest; and all pushed out into the storm.

At Last Island all hope seemed gone.

"One last shot, my boy!" daddy had

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said, as the gun dropped from his shaking hand. "And no one has heard,—no one could hear in the roar of the storm."

"Oh, they could,—they could!" murmured Freddy. "God could make them hear, daddy,—make them hear and come to help us. And I think He will. I have prayed so hard that we might not be drowned here all alone in the storm. You pray, too, daddy,—oh, please pray!"

"I can not,—I *dare* not," was the hoarse answer.

"O daddy, yes you can,—you must! The waters are coming on us so fast, daddy,—so fast! Please try to pray with me. Our Lord made the winds and waves go down when He lived here on earth; He walked on the waters and they did not hurt Him. Oh, they are coming higher and higher on us, daddy! What shall we do?"

"Die," was the hoarse, fierce answer,—
"die here together, my boy,—my little boy! For me it is justice, judgment; but, O my God, why should Thy curse fall on my boy,—my innocent boy?"

"O daddy, no! That isn't the way to pray. You mustn't say 'curse,' daddy.

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You must say: 'Have mercy, dear Lord,—have mercy! Save me and my little boy. Send some one to help us.' Oh, I am trying not to be afraid, but I can't help it, daddy!"

"My boy,—my poor little boy! Climb, Freddy! Try to climb up on the roof—the broken shaft! Leave me here, and try to climb, my boy! You may be safe for a while."

"O daddy, no, I can't climb and leave you," and Freddy clung piteously to his father's breast. "I'd rather die here with you, and God will take us both to heaven together. I haven't been a very good boy, I know; and maybe you haven't either; but if we are sorry He will let us come to Him in heaven—O dad, what is that?" Freddy's low tone changed to one of wild alarm. "What is it now,—what is it now?"

For the dogs, that had been crouching and cowering beside their master, suddenly started up, barking wildly, and dashed out into the rising waters; new sounds blended with the roar of the storm,—shouts, cries, voices.

"Here,—*here!*" daddy feebly essayed to answer. "Call to them, Freddy! It is help.

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God has heard your prayers. Call—call—call—loud as you can, my boy!”

But there was no need. Rex and Roy had already done the calling, the guiding. On they came, the sturdy rescuers, plunging waist-deep through the waters that were already breaking high on the beach and bramble growth, surging and swelling across the broken wall that had once guarded the Old Light, and lapping the low cabin floor. On the brave life-savers came, while Rex and Roy barked in mad welcome; and Freddy’s clear, boyish cry, “Here,—here! Daddy and I are here!” pierced through the darkness and turmoil of the storm. On they came, strong and fearless,—God’s angels surely, thought Freddy, though in strange mortal guise. And one, whose muffling sou’wester had been flung loose in his eager haste, led all the rest.

“Here, my men,—here!” he cried, bursting into the ruined hut, where a little figure stood, white-faced, breathless, bewildered with the joy of his answered prayer. “They are here! God have mercy!” broke in reverent awe from his lips. “Freddy, Freddy,—my own little Freddy here!” [261]

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“Uncle Tom, — Uncle Tom!” And Freddy sobbed outright as he was clasped in those dear, strong arms, held tight to the loving heart. “How did God tell you where to come for me, dear Uncle Tom?—Daddy, daddy, look up,—look up! It’s Uncle Tom!”

And what daddy felt as he looked up into that old friend’s face, what Uncle Tom felt as he looked down on the “dere-lict” that had drifted so far from him, no one can say; for there was no time for words or wonderment. Life-savers can not stop to think, much less to talk. Daddy was caught up by two or three big fellows, without any question, while Uncle Tom looked out for Freddy.

It was a fierce struggle, through surging waves and battering wind and beating rain, to the waiting lifeboats; but, held tight in those strong arms, pressed close to the true heart whose every pulse was a prayer, Freddy felt no fear. Even when the stout boat, fighting its way back to the other shore, tossed like a cork in the breakers, when the oar snapped in Blake’s hand, when all around was foam and spray, in which earth and heaven seemed

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lost, Freddy, nestling in Uncle Tom's sou'wester, felt as if its rough, tarry folds were angel wings.

And so safety and shelter were reached at last. Father Tom gave his little drenched, shivering, white-faced boy into Ford's friendly care.

"Put him to bed somewhere, to get dry and warm."

"But daddy, — my own dear, lost daddy?—"

"Leave him to me, my boy," said Uncle Tom, softly. "I'll take care of daddy. Leave him to me."

And then Ford, who, somewhere back of Cape Cod, had a small boy of his own, proceeded to do his rough best for the little stranger. Freddy was dried, rubbed, and put into a flannel shirt some ten sizes too big for him, and given something hot and spicy to drink, and finally tumbled into a bunk with coarse but spotless sheets, and very rough but comfortable blankets, where in less than four minutes he was sound asleep, worn out, as even the pluckiest eleven-year old boy would be, with the strain on his small body and brave young soul.

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How long he slept, Freddy did not know; but it was long enough for the wind to lull, the skies to brighten, the black clouds to break and scatter before the golden glory of the summer sun. The wide lookout window had been thrown open, and showed a glorious rainbow spanning the western sky. And there, on a pallet thrown hastily on the floor, lay daddy, very still and pale, with Uncle Tom kneeling beside him, holding his hand. An icy fear now clutched Freddy's heart at the sight. Reckless of the ten-sizes-too-big shirt trailing around him, he was out of his bunk with a jump to his father's side.

"Daddy, daddy!—O Uncle Tom, is daddy dead?"

And daddy's eyes opened at the words,—eyes that were no longer burning, but soft and dim with tears.

"Not dead, little Boy Blue! Daddy is alive again,—alive as he has not been for long, long years.—Tell him all, 'Tom. I am too weak. Tell him all. He'll be glad to hear it. I know."

But Father Tom only put his arm around the boy and drew him close to his side.

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"Why should I?" he said, smiling into the upturned face. "We know quite enough for a little boy; don't we, Freddy, — that, like another wanderer from his Father's house, daddy was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found. And now get into some short clothes, if you can find them, and we'll go over to Killykinick in my little motor boat; for poor Brother Bart is in sad terror about you, I am sure."

Ah, in sad terror, indeed! It was a pale, shaken old man that stood on the beach at Killykinick, looking over the sea, and listening to the Captain, who was striving to find hope where he felt there was none.

"Looks as if the old cabin on Last Island might be holding together still. Dan and Neb are knocking a raft together, and if they can make it float they'll go over there and get the little lad off. And if they don't, Padre" (the rough old voice trembled),—"if they don't, wal, you are sky pilot enough to know that the little chap has reached a better shore than this."

"Aye, aye, I know, Jeroboam!" was the

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hoarse, shaken answer. "God knows what is best for His little lamb. His holy will be done. But, O my laddie, my little laddie, why did I let you go from me into the darkness and storm, my little boy, my little boy?"

"Hooray! Hooray!" Wild shouts broke in upon the broken-hearted prayer, as Jim and Dud and Dan burst round the bend of the rocks. "Brother Bart, Brother Bart! Look what's coming, Brother Bart!"

And, turning his dim eyes where the boys pointed, Brother Bart saw a little motor boat making its swift way over the still swelling waves. On it came, dancing in the sunlight arched by the rainbow, tossing and swaying to the pulse of the sea; and in the stern, enthusiastically waving the little signal flag that Ford had put into his hand to remember the life-savers, sat—

"Laddie!" burst from Brother Bart's lips, and he fell upon his knees in thanksgiving. "O God be praised and blessed for the sight! My laddie,—my own little laddie safe, safe,—my laddie coming back to me again!"

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XXIII.—DAN'S MEDAL.

It was the day after the big storm that had made havoc even in the sheltered harbor of Beach Cliff, and so damaged "The Polly" in her safe moorings that six men were busy putting her into shipshape again. And dad's other Polly was in an equally doleful mood.

It was to have been a day of jollification with Marraine. They were to have gone voyaging together over the summer seas, that were smiling as joyously to-day as if they had never known a storm. They were to have stopped at the college camp in Shelter Cove, where Marraine had some girl friends; they were to have kept on their sunlit way to Killykinick, for so dad had agreed; they were to have looked in on the Life-Saving Station, which Marraine had never seen; in fact, they were to have done more pleasant things than Polly could count,—and now the storm had fallen on her namesake and spoiled all.

"Never mind, Pollykins!" comforted Marraine, who could find stars in the

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darkest sky. "We'll each take a dollar and go shopping."

"Only a dollar, Marraine? That won't buy much," said Polly, who had walked in ways where dollars seem very small indeed.

"Oh, yes, it will! There's no telling what it can buy in Jonah's junk shop," laughed Marraine. "I got a rusted tea tray that polished into silver plate, a blackened vase that rubbed into burnished copper. I should not wonder if he had an Aladdin's lamp hidden somewhere in his dusty shelfe."

"Let us go look for it," said Polly, roused into gleeful interest. "Oh, I'd love to have Aladdin's lamp! Wouldn't you, Marraine?"

"What would you wish for, Pollykins?" asked Marraine, softly.

"Oh, lots of things!" said Polly, perching in her lap. "First—first of all, I wish that I could keep you here forever and forever, darling Marraine!"

"Well, you have me for six weeks every summer," laughed Marraine.

"But that isn't forever and forever," sighed Polly. "And mamma and dad and grandmamma and everybody else want you, too."

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"Are you sure of that?" asked the lady, kissing the upturned face.

"Oh, very sure!" replied Polly, positively. "They say it's all nonsense for you to go to the hospital and take care of sick people. It's—it's something—I don't remember what."

"Stubborn pride?" suggested Marraine, with a merry sparkle in her eyes.

"Yes," said Polly, "that's just what grandmamma said. And stubborn pride is something bad; isn't it, Marraine?"

"Well, yes, it is," agreed Marraine,—
"when it is stubborn pride, Pollykins. But when one has empty hands and empty purse and—well, an empty life, too, Pollykins, it is not stubborn pride to try to fill them with work and care and pity and help."

"And that is what you do at the hospital, Marraine?"

"It is what I try to do, Pollykins. When my dear father died, and I found all his money gone, this beautiful home of yours opened its doors wide for me; dad, mamma, grandma, everybody begged me to come here. But—but it wasn't my real home or my real place."

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"Oh, wasn't it, Marraine?" said Polly, sadly.

"No, dear. In our real home, our real place, God gives us work to do,—some work, even though it be only to bless and love. But there was no work for me here; and so I looked around, Pollykins, for my work and my place. If I had been very, *very* good, I might have folded my butterfly wings under a veil and habit, and been a nice little nun, like Sister Claudine."

"Oh, I wouldn't have liked that at all!" said Polly, with a shiver.

"I'm afraid I wouldn't either," was the laughing answer. "Still, it's a lovely, useful, beautiful life, little girl. And the next—the very next—best place and best work seemed to me the hospital, with the white gown and cap I can put off when I please; with sickness and sorrow and suffering to soothe and help; with little children holding out their arms to me, and old people calling to me in their pain, and dying eyes turning to me for hope and help. So I am nurse in a hospital, and out of it, too, when there is need. And it's not for stubborn pride, as grandma says, and no doubt thinks; but because

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I believe it to be my real work and my real place. Now get your dollar, and we'll be off to Jonah's junk shop to look for Aladdin's lamp."

And Polly danced off for her flower-wreathed hat, and the two were soon on their way down the narrow streets to the dull, dingy little shop near the water, where several customers were already looking over the curiously assorted stock, that on weekdays was spread far out on the sidewalk to attract passers-by. Among these was a big, burly grey-haired man, whose bronzed face and easy-fitting clothes proclaimed the sailor.

"Why, Captain Carleton!" greeted Miss Stella, in some surprise.

"God bless my heart and soul!" was the hearty response, and the Captain held out both hands to the speaker. "This is sailor's luck, indeed! From what star of hope did you drop, Miss Stella?"

"Oh, I drop here for a holiday every summer!" she answered gaily. "I am glad to see you looking so well and strong again, Captain."

"Thanks to you, my dear lady! Under the great Master of life and death, thanks

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to you! I was about as far on the rocks as an old craft could be without going to pieces entirely. How that soft little hand of yours steered me into safe water I'll never forget, dear lady,—never forget. And I was a tough patient, too; wasn't I?"

"Well, you did say things sometimes that were not—prayers," was the laughing answer.

And, chatting on pleasantly of the Captain's last winter in the hospital, they glanced over old Jonah's stock until something of interest caught the sailor's eye.

"By George! How in thunder did this get here?"

"A find,—real find, Captain?" asked Miss Stella. "What is it?"

"A medal," he answered,—“a medal awarded for ‘Brave and faithful service on the “Reina Maria” sixty years ago.’” (He was scanning the bronze disc as he spoke),—“‘Juan Farley.’ Good Lord! Yes, poor old Jack! I wonder how he lived and died? And what in Heaven's name is his medal doing here?"

"Perhaps Jonah can tell you," suggested Miss Stella; while Polly, whose bright eyes were searching for Aladdin's lamp, paused to listen. [272]

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“That ar medal?” said Jonah in answer to the Captain’s questioning. “Let me think now! That ar medal—ticketed nineteen, isn’t it?—was left here by a youngster. Now, what in thunder was his name? I’ll have to look in my books to see.”

And while he looked Captain Carleton explained his interest in his find.

“You see, my father was master and half owner of the ‘Reina Maria,’ though she was Spanish built and manned. But, luckily, Jack Farley, a first-class sailor, was second mate. There was a mutiny aboard, and it would have been all up with my father and his chief officer if brave Jack had not smelled mischief in time, and put down the hatches on the scoundrels at the risk of his own life. Ship and cargo (it was a pretty valuable ship) were saved; and this medal, that bears the stamp of her then Spanish Majesty, was Jack’s reward. My father always felt that he ought to have had something more; but the Spanish owners were close-fisted, so my old man had to content himself with helping Jack (who was a rather reckless sort of chap ashore) in his own way. He got him out of many

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a tight place on the strength of that medal; and he would have looked out for him until the last, but he shipped on an East Indian, and drifted out of our reach. And this medal was left here by a boy, you say, my man?"

"Yes, sir" (Jonah had found his entry now),—"by a boy who said it was his: that it had been given him by an old sailor man who was dead; and he'd like to sell the medal now, for he wanted some money bad."

"Good!" said the old Captain, eagerly. "I'll give him his price. "Who and where is the boy?"

"His name is Dan Dolan and he lives at Killykinick."

"Dan Dolan!" exclaimed Miss Stella.

"Oh, does he mean my—*my* Dan, Marraine?" chirped Polly, breathlessly.

"What! You know the boy?" cried the old sailor, in amazement. "God bless me,—you!"

"Why, yes, we know him,—don't we, Pollykins?" said Miss Stella. "But what he is doing with the medal we can't say. We're certain he has it rightfully and honestly; and as soon as 'The Polly' (my

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cousin's yacht — can spread her broken wings, we are going to Killykinick. Suppose you come with us, and see the owner of the medal, and strike a bargain yourself?"

"By George, I will,—I will! A sail with you, Miss Stella, is a temptation I can not resist. And I must have the medal. I must see the boy, and hear how he got it. I'll buy it from him at his own price; and you shall negotiate the sale, dear lady!"

"Take care," said Miss Stella, with a merry sparkle in her eyes,—“take care how you do business with me, Captain! Remember how I drew upon you for the babies' ward last winter! I can fleece without mercy, as you know.”

"Fleece as you please," was the hearty answer. "I can stand it, for that soft little hand of yours did work for this old man that he can never repay."

So the agreement was made; and Miss Stella, having invested in a queer, twisted candelstick, which she declared was quite equal to Aladdin's lamp, and Polly having decided to reserve her dollar for a neighboring candy store, the party at Jonah's junk shop separated, with the promise of

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meeting as soon as "The Polly" should be ready for flight to Killykinick.

But that pleasant excursion was indefinitely postponed; for when Miss Stella reached Polly's home it was to find two priestly visitors awaiting her. One was an old friend, the present pastor of St. Mary's Church, near the Foresters' home; the other, tall, pale even through his bronze, anxious-eyed, she had never met.

"Father Rayburn, Miss Allen," was the pastor's brief introduction. "We have come to throw ourselves on your mercy, my dear young lady. You are here for your summer holiday, I know; and I hesitate to interrupt it. But Father Rayburn is in sore need of experienced service that you alone can give."

"You need a nurse?" asked Miss Stella.

"Yes." (It was Father Rayburn who answered.) "My brother—or perhaps I should say my brother-in-law, as that is really our relationship,—is lying very ill at Killykinick. While still prostrated with fever, he was exposed to the storm of yesterday, in which he nearly lost his life. Between the shock, the excitement of his rescue by the life-savers, he is very, very

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ill,—too ill to be removed to a hospital; and he is at Killykinick with only boys and men to care for him,” continued Father Rayburn. “The doctors tell me an experienced nurse is necessary, and we can find none willing to take so serious a case in such a rude, remote place. But my good friend Father John seems to think that you would take pity on our great need.”

“Oh, I will,—I will!” was the eager answer. “I already have friends at Killykinick among those fine boys from St. Andrew’s. My little goddaughter and I were to make an excursion there to-day, but the storm disabled Mr. Forester’s yacht. I am so glad to be of service to you, Father! I will get ready at once.”

In spite of the joyful return of laddie yesterday, there was gloom this morning at Killykinick. Daddy, who had been brought over at his own request from the Life-Saving Station, lay in the old Captain’s room, which Brother Bart had resigned to him, very, very sick indeed.

“Sinking fast, I’m afraid,” the doctor said. “The fever has broken, but the

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shock of yesterday's danger and rescue has been too much for a man in his weakened state. Still there's a chance for him,—a fighting chance. But it will take very careful and experienced nursing to pull him through."

So Father Tom had gone in search of a nurse, leaving Freddy and Brother Bart watching by the sick bed; while Dan, who as second mate was assisting his chief officers to right and repair the "Sary Ann," listened with a heavy heart to the old salt's prognostications.

"He won't last the day out," declared Captain Jeb. "Blue about the gills already! But, Lord, what could you expect, doused and drenched and shaken up like he was yesterday? It will be hard on the little chap, who was so glad to get his father back. It's sort of a pity, 'cording to my notion, that, being adrift so long, he didn't go down in deep-sea soundings, and not come ashore to break up like this."

"O Captain Jeb, no, no!" Dan looked up from his hammering on the "Sary Ann" in quick protest against such false doctrine. "A man isn't like a ship: he has a soul. And that's the main thing,

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after all. If you save your soul, it doesn't make much difference about your body. And drifting ashore right here has saved the soul of Mr. Wirt (or Mr. Neville, as we must call him now); for he was lying over on Last Island, feeling that there was no hope for him in heaven or on earth. And then Freddy came to him, and Father Tom, and he turned to God for pardon and mercy; and now his dying is all right,—though I haven't given him up yet," concluded Dan, more cheerfully. "Poor little Freddy has been praying so hard all night, I feel he is going to be heard somehow. And I've seen Mick Mulligan, that had typhoid last summer, looking a great deal worse than Mr. Neville, and before Thanksgiving there wasn't a boy on the hill he couldn't throw. Here comes Father Tom back with—

with—" Dan dropped his hammer entirely, and stood up to stare in amazement at the little motor boat making its way to the broken wharf. "Jing! Jerusalem! if—if it isn't that pretty lady from Beach Cliff that Polly calls Marraine!"

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XXIV.—A STAR IN THE DARKNESS.

MARRAINE,—Polly's Marraine,—Aunt Winnie's old friend,—the lovely, silver-robed lady of the party who had stood by Dan in his trouble!—it was she, indeed, all dressed in white, with a pretty little cap on her soft, wavy hair, and her hands full of flowers. Miss Stella always made a first appearance at a patient's bedside with flowers. She said they were a friendly introduction that never failed.

“It's the nurse woman they went for,” gasped Captain Jeb, as the new arrival proceeded to step from boat to wharf with a light grace that scarcely needed Father Tom's assisting hand. “Well, I'll be tee-totally jiggered! Who ever saw a nurse woman pretty as that?”

But Dan did not hear. He had dropped nails, hammer, and all present interest in the recuperation of the “Sary Ann,” and was off down the beach to meet the fair visitor, whose coming he could not understand.

“Danny,” she said, holding out her

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empty hand to him,—“Miss Winnie’s Danny!—I told you I had friends here, Father Rayburn; and this is one that I expect to find my right-hand man. What a queer, quaint, wonderful place this Killykinick is! I am so glad you brought me here to help you!”

Help them! Help them! Dan caught the words in breathless amazement. Then Miss Stella, Polly’s Marraine, was the nurse! It seemed altogether astounding; for sick nurses, in Dan’s experience, had always been fat old ladies who had out-lived all other duties, and appeared only on important occasions, to gossip in solemn whispers, and to drink unlimited tea. And now Polly’s Marraine was a *nurse*! It was impossible to doubt the fact; for Father Tom was leading her straight to Mr. Neville’s side, Dan following in dumb bewilderment.

The sick man lay in the old Captain’s room, whither, at his own request, the life-savers had borne him the previous evening. His eyes, deep-sunken in their sockets, were closed, his features rigid. Poor little Freddy, tearful and trembling, knelt by Brother Bart, who paused in his

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murmured prayers to shake his head hopelessly at the newcomer's approach.

"I'm glad ye're here before he goes entirely, Father. It's time, I think, for the last blessing. I am afraid he can neither hear nor see."

But Miss Stella had stepped forward, put her soft hand on the patient's pulse; and then, with a quick whisper to Father Tom, she had dropped her flowers, opened the little wrist-bag they had concealed, and proceeded to "do things,"—just what sort of things Dan did not know. He could only see the soft hands moving swiftly, deftly; baring the patient's arm to the shoulder and flashing something sharp and shining into the pale flesh; holding the fluttering pulse until, with a long, deep sigh, the sick man opened his eyes and stared dully at the white-robed figure bending over him.

"Who—what are you?" he said faintly.

Miss Stella smiled. It was the question that many a patient, struggling out of the Dark Valley, had asked before, when his waking eyes had fallen upon her fair, sweet face, her white-robed form.

"Only your nurse," she answered

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softly,—“your nurse who has come to help you, to take care of you. You feel better already?”

“Yes, better, better!” was the faint reply. “My boy,—where is my boy? Freddy! Freddy!” He stretched out his feeble hand. But it was met by a firm, gentle grasp that was not Freddy’s.

“No boys now,” said Miss Stella in the soft, steady voice of one used to such commands. “There must be no seeing, no talking, even no thinking, my patient. You must take this powder I am putting to your lips. Close your eyes again and go to sleep.—Now please everybody go away and leave him to me,” was the whispered ukase, that even Father Tom obeyed without protest; and Miss Stella began her reign at Killykinick.

It was a triumphant reign from the very first. Old and young fell at once under her gentle sway, and yielded to her command without dispute. The cabin of the “Lady Jane” was given over to her entirely; even Brother Bart taking to the upper deck; while a big, disused awning was stretched into a shelter for the morning and the noontime mess.

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And, to say nothing of her patient—who lay, as Brother Bart expressed it, “like a shorn lamb” under her gentle bidding, gaining health and strength each day,—every creature in Killykinick was subservient to Miss Stella’s sweet will. Freddy was her devoted slave; lazy Jim, ready to move at her whisper; even Dud, after learning her father’s rank in the army, was ready to oblige her as a gentleman should. But it was Dan, as she had foreseen from the first, who was her right-hand man, ready to fetch and carry, to lift any burden, however heavy, by day and night; Dan who rowed or sailed or skimmed to any point in the motor boat Father Tom kept waiting at her demand; Dan who, when the patient grew better, and she had an hour or two off, was her willing and delighted escort over rocks or sea.

And as they sailed or rowed or loitered by beach and shore, Miss Stella drew from Aunt Winnie’s boy the hopes and fears he could not altogether hide. She learned how Aunt Winnie was “pining” for her home and her boy; she read the letters, with their untold love and longing; she

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saw the look on the boyish face when Dan, too mindful of his promise to Father Mack to speak plainly, said he 'reckoned she wouldn't be here long if he didn't get her somehow *home*.' She learned, too, all Dan could tell about poor old Nutty's medal.

"Get it for me the next time you go to town, Danny," she said to him. And Danny drew it from old Jonah's junk shop and put it in Miss Stella's hand.

And then, when at last her patient was able to sit up in Great-uncle Joe's big chair in the cabin doorway and look out at the sea, Miss Stella wrote to dad and Polly to come and take her home.

"Lord, but we'll all miss her!" Captain Jeb voiced the general sentiment of Killykinick when this decision was made public. "I ain't much sot on women folks when you're in deep water, but 'his one suttently shone out like a star in the dark."

"And kept a-shining," added Neb,—
"a-shining and a-smiling straight through."

"She's a good girl," said Brother Bart. "And I'm thinking—well, it doesn't matter what I'm thinking. But it's a lonely time laddie's poor father will be having, after all his wild wanderings; and it will be

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hard for him to keep house and home. But the Lord is good. Maybe it was His hand that led Miss Stella here."

"Oh, what will we do when she is gone, daddy?" mourned Freddy. "Of course you are getting well now, and Dan and I can wait on you and get you broth and jelly; but it won't be like having dear Miss Stella. Oh, I just love her! Don't you, daddy? She is almost as good as a real mother."

And daddy's pale cheek had flushed as he answered:

"Almost, little Boy Blue!"

"Well, we're all going home in a week," said Dan, as he stood out under the stars that night. "But I'll miss you sure, Miss Stella; for you don't mind being friends with a rough sort of a boy like me, and you know Aunt Winnie; and if I give up and -- and go down you'll -- you'll understand."

"Give up and go down!" repeated Miss Stella. "You give up and go down, Danny? Never, -- never! You're the sort of boy to climb, however steep and rough and sharp the way, -- to climb to the stars."

"That's what Aunt Winnie dreams,"

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was the answer. "That's what I dream, too, sometimes, Miss Stella. But it isn't for me to dream: I have to wake up and hustle. I can't stay dreaming and let Aunt Winnie die. So if I have to give up and go down, Miss Stella, you'll—you'll understand.

And Miss Stella steadied her voice to answer:

"Yes, Danny, I'll understand."

But, in spite of this, Miss Stella's parting from Killykinick was not altogether a sad one; for "The Polly" came down next morning, with flying colors, to bear her away. Dad was aboard; also Polly, jubilant at recovering her dear Marraine after three weeks of desertion; and Captain Carleton, and Miss Stella's girl friends who had been picked up from the camp at Shelter Cove. It was such a picnic party altogether that sighs and tears seemed quite out of place; for, after all, things had turned out most cheerfully, as everybody agreed.

So, with "The Polly" glittering in new paint and gilding necessitated by the storm, with all her pennants flying in the wind, with the victrola singing its merriest

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boat song, and snowy handkerchiefs fluttering gay farewells, Miss Stella was borne triumphantly away. It was to be an all-day cruise. Great hampers, packed with everything good to eat and drink, were stored below; and "The Polly" spread her wings and took a wide flight to sea, turning back only when the shadows began to deepen over the water, and the stars to peep from the violet sky. The young people were a trifle tired; Polly had fallen asleep on a pile of cushions, while the girls from Shelter Cove sang college songs.

In the stern, Captain Carleton had found his way to Miss Stella's side. She was leaning on the taffrail, listening to the singing, her white fleecy wrap falling around her like a cloud.

"You look your name to-night," said the Captain: "Stella,—a star. By George, you were a star to me when the sky looked pretty black! I was thinking of that yesterday when some Eastern chap came along with a lot of diamonds for sale. I don't know much about such folderols, but there was one piece—a star—that I'd like to give to you, if you would take

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it and wear it in remembrance of a rough old fellow who can't speak all he feels."

"Ah, Captain Carleton,—Captain Carleton!" laughed the lady softly. "Take care! That Eastern chap was fooling you, I'm sure."

"Not at all,—not at all!" was the quick reply. "I got an expert's opinion. The star is worth the thousand dollars he asked."

"A thousand dollars,—a thousand dollars!" repeated Miss Stella, in dismay. "And you would give me a thousand dollar star? Why, you must have money to burn, indeed!"

"Well, I suppose I have," was the answer,—"much more than a lonely old fellow of sixty odd, without chick or child, will ever need. Will you take the star, dear lady nurse?"

"No," said Miss Stella, gently; "though I thank you for your generous thought of me, my good friend. But I have a better and a wiser investment for you. Have you forgotten this?" She took Dan's medal from the bag on her wrist.

"By George, I *did* forget it!" said the old man. "Somehow, it slipped my memory completely in our pleasant hurry."

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Poor Jack Farley's medal! You've found the chap that owns it, you say?"

"Yes," was the answer,—“a brave, sturdy, honest little chap, who stood by your poor old friend in his last lonely days, and helped him in his last lonely cruise, and took the medal from his dying hands as the last and only legacy he had to give. Would you consider him Jack Farley's heir, Captain Carleton?"

"Most certainly I would," was the rejoinder.

"Then make him his heir," she said softly.

"Eh! — what? I don't understand," muttered the old gentleman.

Then Miss Stella explained. It was such an explanation as only gentle speakers like Miss Stella can make. She told about bright, brave, plucky Dan and Aunt Winnie, of the scholarship at St. Andrew's, and of the Little Sisters of the Poor. She told of the attic home over the Mulligans' for which Aunt Winnie was "pining," and of the dreams that Dan dreamed.

"It would seem a pity," Miss Stella said, "for him to give up and go down."

"By George, he must not,—he shall not!" said the old sailor. "You want me to do

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something for him? Out with it, my lady!"

"Yes. I want you to invest, not in diamond stars, Captain, but in Jack Farley's medal. I was to negotiate the sale, you know."

"Yes, yes! And you warned me you were going to fleece me; so go on,—go on! What is the boy's—what is your price?" asked the Captain.

"A pension," said Miss Stella, softly,—
"the pension you would give Jack Farley if he were here to claim it,—just the little pension an old sailor would ask for his last watch below. It will hold the little nest under the eaves that Danny calls home for the old aunt that he loves; it will steady the young wings for their flight to the stars; it will keep the young heart brave and pure and warm as only love and home can."

"You're right,—you're right,—you're always right, dear lady! If old Jack were here, I'd pension him, as you say, and fling in a little extra for his grog and his pipe. Old Jack could have counted on me for four or five hundred a year. But a sturdy, strapping young chap like yours is worth a dozen groggy old salts. So

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name your figure, my lady. I have money to burn, as you say. Name your figure, dear lady, and I'll invest in your boy."

"Old Jack's pension, then, Captain Carleton,—old Jack's pension for Aunt Winnie and Dan,—old Jack's pension, and nothing more."

"It's theirs," was the hearty answer,—
"or, rather, it's yours, my dear lady!"

"Oh, no, no, no!" she disclaimed. "The generous gift is all your own, dear friend,—all your own. And it will be repaid. Dan and his good old aunt may have no words to thank you, to bless you; but some day" (and the glad voice grew softer, sweeter),—"some day when life's long voyage is over for you, Captain, and the log-book is open to the Master's gaze—"

"It will be a tough showing," interrupted the old man, gruffly,—
"a tough showing through and through."

"Oh, no, no!" she said gently. "One entry, I am sure, will clear many a page, dear friend. One entry will give you safe anchorage—harbor rights; for has not the Master Himself said, 'As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me'?"

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XXV.—GOING HOME.

"WE'RE to be off to-morrow," said Brother Bart, a little sadly. "And, though it will be a blessed thing to get back in the holy peace of St. Andrew's, with the boys all safe and sound—which is a mercy I couldn't expect,—to say nothing of laddie's father being drawn out of his wanderings into the grace of God, I'm sore-hearted at leaving Killykinick. You've been very good to us, Jeroboam,—both you and your brother, who is a deal wiser than at first sight you'd think. You've been true, friends both in light and darkness; and may God reward you and bring you to the true faith! That will be my prayer for you night and day.—And now you're to pack up, boys, and get all your things together; for it's Father Regan's orders that we are to come back home."

"Where is *our* home, daddy?" asked Freddy, with lively interest. "For we can have a real true home now, can't we?"

"I hope so, my boy." They were out on the smooth stretch of beach, where

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daddy, growing strong and well fast, spent most of his time, stretched out in one of Great-uncle Joe's cushiony chairs; while Roy and Rex crouched contentedly at his feet, or broke into wild frolic with Freddy on the rocks or in the sea. "I hope so; though I'm afraid I don't know much about making a home, my little Boy Blue!"

"Oh, don't you, daddy?" said Freddy, ruefully. "I have always wanted a home so much,—a real true home, with curtains and carpets, and pictures on the walls, and a real fire that snaps and blazes."

"Yes, I heard you say that before," answered his father, softly. "I think it was that little talk on the boat that brought me down, where I could take a peep at my homeless little boy again; though I was afraid Captain Jeb would find me out if I ventured to Killykinick. I was just making up my mind to risk it and go over, when this fever caught me."

"But why—were you hiding, daddy? Why did you stay away so long?"

"Life had grown very black for me. and I didn't want to make it black for you, Freddy. I lost faith and hope and

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love when I lost your mother. I couldn't settle down to a bare, lonely life without her. I felt I must be free,—free to wander where I willed. It was all wrong,—all wrong, Freddy. But daddy was in darkness, without any guiding star. So I left you to Uncle Tom, gave up my name, my home, and broke loose like a ship without rudder or sail. And where it led me, where you found me, you know."

"Ah, yes!" Freddy laid his soft young cheek against his father's. "It was all wrong. But now you have come back; and everything is right again, Uncle Tom says; and we'll have a real home together. He said that, too, before he went away,—you and I would have a home, daddy."

"We'll try," replied daddy, cheerfully. "With you and the dogs together, Freddy, we'll try. We'll get the house and the cushions and the carpets, and do our best."

Going home! Dan was thinking of it, too, a little sadly, as somewhat later he stood on the stretch of rocks, looking out at the fading west. He was going home to "give up." Only yesterday morning a brief scrawl from Pete Patterson had informed him he would be ready for

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business next week, and Dan must come back with an answer—"Yes" or "No." So it was good-bye to St. Andrew's for Dan to-night; good-bye to all his hopes and dreams to-morrow. Something seemed to rise in Dan's throat at the thought. To-morrow he must go back, a college boy no longer, but to Pete Patterson's wagon and Pete Patterson's shop.

And while he stood there alone, watching the deepening shadows gather over rock and reef and shoal where he had spent such happy days, there came a sudden burst of glad music over the waters, and around the bending shore of Killykinick came a fairy vision: "'The Polly,'" fluttering with gay pennants, jewelled in colored lights from stem to stern; "'The Polly,'" laden with a crowd of merry-makers in most hilarious mood, coming on a farewell feast in charge of three white-capped and white-coated waiters; "'The Polly,'" that swept triumphantly to the mended wharf (where the "Sary Ann" was slowly recuperating from her damages, in a fresh coat of paint and brand-new mainsail), and took undisputed possession of Killykinick.

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"I just had to come and say good-bye," declared Miss Polly; "and dad said I could make a party of it, if Marraine would take us in charge. And so we're here to have a real, *real* last good time."

Then all sat down on the moonlit sands; and the victrola played its gayest tunes, and the white-capped waiters served good things that quite equalled Polly's last party. And when that was nearly over, and the guests were still snapping the French "kisses" and cracking sugar-shelled nuts, Dan found Miss Stella, who had been chatting with her late patient most of the evening, standing at his side. Perhaps it was the moonlight, but he thought he had never seen her look so lovely. Her eyes were like stars, and there was a soft rose-flush on her cheek, and the smile on her sweet lips seemed to kindle her whole face into radiance.

"Come sit down on the rocks beside me, Danny,—Miss Winnie's Danny. I've got some news for you."

"News for me?" Danny lifted his eyes; and Miss Stella saw that, in spite of all the fun and frolic around him, they looked strangely sad and dull.

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"You're not having a good time to-night, are you?" she asked softly.

"Yes, I am,—or at least I'm trying," said Dan, stoutly. "It was surely nice of you all to give us this send off. But—but, you see, I can't help feeling a little bad, because—because—" and he had to stop to clear the lump from his throat. "It seems to sort of end things for me."

"O Danny, Danny, no it doesn't!" And now Miss Stella's eyes were stars indeed. "It's the beginning of things bright and beautiful for you."

And then, in sweet, trembling, joyful tones, she told him all,—told him of Captain Carleton and the medal; of the pension that was to be his and Aunt Winnie's; of the kind, strong hand that had been stretched out to help him, that he might keep on without hindrance,—keep on his upward way.

"To the stars, Danny" concluded the gentle speaker softly. "We must take the highest aim, even if we fail to reach it,—to the stars."

"O Miss Stella,—dear, dear Miss Stella!" and the sob came surely now, in Dan's bewildered joy, his gratitude, his relief.

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“How good you are,—how good you are! Oh, I will try to deserve it all, Miss Stella! A home for Aunt Winnie, and St. Andrew’s,—*St. Andrew’s* again!” And Dan sprang to his feet, and the college cry went ringing over the moonlit rocks. “It’s St. Andrew’s for Dan Dolan, now forever!”

The rest of that evening seemed a bewildering dream to Dan,—more bewildering even than Miss Polly’s party. The story of his medal and his luck went flying around Killykinick, with most dazzling additions. Before the guests departed, Dan was a hero indeed, adopted by a millionaire whose life his father or uncle or somebody had saved from sharks and whales fifty or seventy-five years ago.

“Oh, I’m so glad!” said Polly, as she shook hands for good-bye. “I always did say you were the nicest boy in the world. And now you needn’t ever be a newsboy or bootblack again, Dan.”

“I’ll see you again before very long,” said Miss Stella, as he helped her on the boat, and she slipped a gold piece in his hand. “Here is the price of Jack Farley’s

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medal. You must take Aunt Winnie home right away."

"Oh, I will,—I will indeed!" said Dan joyfully. "She will be back in Mulligans' as soon as I can get her there, you bet, Miss Stella!"

"I'm durn sorry to see you go, matey!" said Captain Jeb next morning, as they pulled out the new sails of the "Sary Ann" for a start. "But whenever you want a whiff of salt air and a plunge in salt water, why, Killykinick is here and your job of second mate open to you."

"Shake on that!" said Dan, gripping his old friend's hand. "If I know myself, I'll be down every summer."

"Looks as if I owed you something for all that fishing," remarked old Neb, pulling out his leather wallet.

"Not a cent!" said Dan, briskly. "I'm a monied man now, Neb,—a regular up-and-down plute. Keep the cash for some new nets next summer when we go fishing again."

And so, with friendly words and wishes from all, even from Dud, whom recent events had quite knocked out of his usual grandeur, the whole party bade adieu

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to Killykinick. Freddy and his father were to remain a while at Beach Cliff with Father Tom, who was taking his holiday there.

At Brother Bart's request, the home journey was to be made as much as possible by rail, so after the "Sary Ann," still a little stiff and creaky in the joints, had borne them to the steamboat, which in a few hours touched the mainland and made connections with the train, the travellers' route lay along scenes very different from the rugged rocks and sands they had left. As they swept by golden harvest fields and ripening orchards and vineyards, whose rich yield was purpling in the autumn sun, good Brother Bart heaved a sigh of deepest content.

"Sure you may say what you please about water, Danny lad, but God's blessing is on the good green land. If it be the Lord's will, I'll never leave it again; though we might have found worse places than Killykinick and those good old men there,—may God lead them to the Light!"

And as the Limited Express made its schedule time, Pete Patterson was just

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closing up as usual at sundown, when a sturdy, brown-cheeked boy burst into his store,—a boy that it took Pete's keen eyes full half a minute to recognize.

"Dan Dolan!" he cried at last,—
"Dan Dolan, grown and fattened and slicked up like—like a yearling heifer! Danny boy, I'm glad to see you,—I'm glad to see you, sure! You've come to take the job?"

"No, I haven't,—thank you all the same, Pete!" was the quick answer. "I've struck luck for sure,—luck with a fine old plute, who is ready to stake me for all I could earn here, and keep me at St. Andrew's."

"Stake you for all you could earn here?" echoed Pete, in amazement.

"I'll tell you all about it later," said Dan, breathlessly. "Just now I'm dumb struck, Pete. I came flying back to take up my old quarters at the Mulligans', and find the house shut up and everybody gone. Land! It did give me a turn, sure! I was counting on that little room upstairs, and all Aunt Winnie's things she left there, and Tabby and the stove and the blue teapot. But they're all gone." And

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Dan sank down on a big packer's box, feeling that he was facing a dissolving world in which he had no place.

"Oh, they're not far!" said Pete, a little gruffly; for Dan's tidings had been somewhat of a blow. "The old woman's father died and left a little bit of money, and they bought a tidy little place out on Cedar Place, not far from St. Mary's Church. You'll find them there. You've made up your mind for good and all to stick to the high-brows? I'd make it worth your while to come here."

Dan rose from the packer's box and looked around at the hams and shoulders and lard buckets and answered out of the fulness of his grateful heart:

"Yes, I've made up my mind, Pete. It's St. Andrew's for me,—St. Andrew's now and, I hope, forever. But—but if you want any help with writing or figuring, I'll come round Saturday nights and give you a lift; for I won't be far. I'm sticking to old friends and the old camping ground still."

And, with this cheery assurance, Dan was off again to find the vanished roof tree that had been all he ever knew of home.

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He recalled the place. It was only a short walk from the college gate. Indeed, the row of cedars that fronted the little whitewashed house had been once the boundary of the college grounds. There was a bit of a garden in front, and a porch with late roses climbing over it, and—and—

Dan stood stock-still for a moment,—then he flung open the little gate, and with a regular Sioux war-whoop dashed up the gravelled path; for there—there seated in Mrs. Mulligan's best rocker, with Tabby curled up at her feet—was Aunt Winnie herself, drinking a cup of tea!

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XXVI.—RAINBOWS.

“DANNY!” cried Aunt Winnie, clutching her teacup with trembling hand. “God save us, it’s Danny himself!”

“Nobody else,” said Dan, as he caught her in a bearish hug and kissed the withered cheek again and again. It looked paler than when he had left her,—paler and thinner; and there were hollows under the patient eyes.

“But what are you doing here, Aunt Win?” he asked in amazement.

“Just spending the day, Danny. Mrs. Mulligan sent Molly for me this morning. She wanted me to see her new place, and to tell her what was to be done with my bit of things. She is thinking of renting her rooms, and my things are in the way. They are fine rooms, with rosebud paper on the walls, and a porch looking out at the church beyant; and she could be getting seven dollars a month for them. But she’s got the table and stove and beds, and all our old furniture that nobody would want; so I’ve told her to send them off to-morrow to sell for what they

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will bring. Sure" (and the old voice trembled) "we'll never have any call for them again, Danny lad,—never again."

"Oh, we won't?" said Danny, with another hug that came near doing for teacup completely. "Just take back your orders quick as you can, Aunt Winnie, I'm renting those rooms right now."

"Sure, Danny,—Danny boy, have ye come back with a fever on ye?"

"Yes," grinned Dan,—"regular gold fever, Aunt Winnie! Look at that!" He clapped the twenty dollar gold piece into Aunt Winnie's trembling hand. "That's for you, Aunt Winnie,—that's to rent those pink-flowered rooms."

"Sure it's mad the poor boy is entirely!" cried Aunt Winnie, as Mrs. Mulligan and Molly came hurrying out on the porch.

"Do I look it?" asked Dan, laughing into their startled faces.

"Ye don't," said Mrs. Mulligan. "But spake out plain, and don't be bewildering the poor woman, Danny Dolan."

And then Danny spoke out as plain as his breathless eagerness would permit, and told the story of the "pension."

"It will be thirty-five dollars a month,

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Captain Carleton says; he'd have to throw in the five to poor old Nutty for grög and tobacco."

"Ah, God save us,—God save us!" was all Aunt Winnie could murmur, tearfully.

"And I guess thirty-five dollars will run those rosebud rooms of yours pretty safe and slick; won't they, Mrs. Mulligan? So put Aunt Winnie and me down as tenants right off."

"I will,—I will!" answered Mrs. Mulligan, joyfully. "Sure my heart was like lead in my breast at the thought of giving up yer bit of things, Miss Winnie. But now,—now come along, Molly girl, and we'll be fixing the rooms this minute. What's the good of yer going back to the Sisters at all?" And Mrs. Mulligan put a motherly arm around Aunt Winnie's trembling form. "Give her another cup of tea, Molly; for she's all done up with joy at having her own home and her own boy again, thank God for that same!"

And then, leaving dear Aunt Winnie to this good friend's tender ministrations, Dan kept on his way to St. Andrew's, taking a flying leap over the college wall to the sunset walk, where perhaps he

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would find Father Mack saying his Office. He was not mistaken: his old friend was there, walking slowly under the arching trees. His face kindled into light as he stretched out a trembling hand.

"I thought perhaps you would come here, my boy," he said. "I was just thanking God, Danny. Brother Bart has told us the good news. It is all right, as I hoped and prayed,—all right, as I *knew* it would be, Danny. Now tell me, yourself, all about this wonderful blessing."

And again this father and son sat down upon the broken grave slab, and Danny told Father Mack all.

"Ah, it is the good God's hand!" the old priest said softly. "But this is only the start, my son. The climb is still before you,—a climb that may lead over steeps sharp and rough as the rocks of Killykinick."

But the fading light seemed to aureole Father Mack's silvery head as he spoke.

"You will keep on and up,—on and up; for God is calling you, my son,—calling you to heights where He leads His own,—heights which as yet you can not see."

The speaker laid his hand upon Dan's head in benediction that thrilled the boy's

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heart to its deepest depths,—a benediction that he never forgot; for it was Father Mack's last. Only a few days later the college bell's solemn note, sounding over the merry greetings of the gathering students, told that for the good old priest all the lessons of life were over.

And Dan, climbing sturdily up the heights at his saintly guide's bidding, has found the way, so far, smoothed and softened beyond his hopes by his summer at Killykinick. Even his stumbling-stone Dud was removed to another college, his father having been ordered to a Western post. With Jim and Freddy as his friends, all the "high-steppers," old and young, of St. Andrew's were ready to welcome him into rank and line. And, with Aunt Winnie as administratrix of Captain Carleton's pension "there isn't a dacinter-looking boy in the college," as Mrs. Mulligan stoutly declares.

How Aunt Winnie stretched out that pension only the Irish fairies, or perhaps the Irish angels, know. The little pink-flowered rooms have blossomed out into a very bower of comfort and cheer. There are frilly curtains at the windows, a rosy-

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hued lamp, and a stand of growing plants always in bloom. There are always bread and cheese and apple sauce, or something equally "filling," for hungry boys to eat.

And when Aunt Winnie was fairly settled, who should appear but Miss Stella, who had come to nurse a dear old friend near by,—Miss Stella, who dropped in most naturally in her off hours to chat with dear old Aunt Winnie and take a cup of tea! And Freddy's daddy, who had plunged into life and law business with zest, often brought his big automobile round to take Freddy for a spin after study hours, and called on the way very frequently to take Miss Stella home.

It was on one of those bright afternoons that they all went to look at the new house that was going up on a wooded hillside not very far from the college,—the house that was to be Freddy's long-wished-for home. It had been a lot of fun watching it grow. Now it was nearly done,—the big pillared porch ready for its climbing roses; the pretty rooms waiting their rugs and curtains; the great stone chimney, that was to be the heart and life of things, rising in the center of all.

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"My! but this is fine!" said Freddy, who had not seen this crowning touch before. "Let's light it up, daddy,—let's light it up and see how it burns."

And, dashing out for an armful of wood left by the builders, Freddy soon had a glorious blaze on the new hearth-stone,—a blaze that, blending with the sunset streaming through the west windows, made things bright indeed.

"This is great!" said Freddy. "And when we have the chairs and tables and cushions and curtains—who is going to pick out the cushions and curtains, dad?"

"Oh, I suppose we can have them sent up from the store!" answered dad, anticipating such matters by pushing up a big packing box to the fire, to serve as a seat for their smiling guest.

"Oh, can't you do it, daddy?"

"George! no! I wouldn't know a curtain from a rug, my boy!"

"And you don't know about dishes or cups, or pans to make gingerbread?" continued Freddy, the glow fading from his face as he realized all these masculine disabilities.

"Not a thing," was dad's reply.

"Gee!" said Freddy, in a much troubled

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voice. "We'll be right bad off for a real home, after all, daddy."

"Perhaps we can find a nice old black mammy who will take care of us all," observed daddy, his eyes twinkling almost as they used to twinkle in the days of Little Boy Blue.

"Yes, I suppose we can," said Freddy, with a wistful little sigh, "I suppose that is what we will *have* to do, daddy. But I wish—it's going to be such a pretty house every other way,—I wish we could have a pretty lady to sit at the head of the table and pour our tea."

"Would *I* do, Freddy?" asked Miss Stella, stealing a soft little hand into his.

"You, Miss Stella,—*you*,—*you*?" gasped Freddy. "Oh, that would be rip-roaring, sure enough! But you couldn't,—you wouldn't!"

"I might," was the low answer; and Miss Stella arose and drew little Boy Blue to her loving heart. "I might come if you want me very much, Freddy,—so I promised daddy last night."

"For there is no real right home without a mother, son," said daddy; and his arm went around to meet Miss Stella's until

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Freddy was locked in their double clasp. And, looking from one glad face to the other, a thousand rainbows seemed to burst upon his troubled sky, and little Boy Blue understood.

So there was a wedding in the little church at Beach Cliff when the hydrangeas were in bloom the next summer,—a wedding that drew the Forester clan from far and near. Even the two grandmothers, after they had inspected the Neville family tree through their lorgnettes, declared their satisfaction that Stella was going to do the proper thing at last.

Daddy was the daddy of old times, before the dark clouds of doubt and despair had gathered around him and he had drifted about, the derelict Mr. Wirt; while Miss Stella, veiled in soft mists of tulle, looked what she had been to him, what she would ever be to him—his guiding star. Polly, who was the only bridesmaid (for so Marraine would have it), carried a basket of flowers as big as herself; Father Tom said the Nuptial Mass; and Freddy stood at daddy's side, the very happiest of "best men." And Dan who was off on his summer vacation

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at Killykinick, came down in the "Sary Ann," with Captain Jeb slicked up for the occasion in real "store clothes." And there was a wonderful wedding feast at the Forester home, with a cake three stories high, and three tables full of wedding presents; Captain Carleton's diamond star, that he *would* send, shining with dazzling light among the rest.

And, then, such a house-warming followed as surpassed Freddy's wildest dreams with a real fire leaping on the hearth, with the rugs and curtains and cushions just right; for Miss Stella (or Marraine as she chose that Freddy should call her,—for, as she said, "Your own dear mother is in heaven, my boy"),—Miss Stella had picked them all out herself. And Father Tom beamed happily on his reconstructed family; and the Fathers and Brothers and boys from St. Andrew's dropped in without ceremony; for Marraine had welcome for all, now that she was a fixed star in her real home and her real place.

Though dear Aunt Winnie has dropped at least ten years of her life, and old Neb's whale oil has done more for her rheumatism than all the store medicines she ever tried;

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though more joy and comfort has come into these sunset years than she ever dared hope, she still sits on her little porch in the evening, with a look in her old eyes that tells she is dreaming.

"What do you see, Aunt Win?" asked Dan one evening, as, after a tough pull up the Hill of Knowledge, he bounded up the Mulligan stairs to drop at her feet and lay his head in her lap.

"Sure it's not for an old woman to spake, Danny dear!" she answered again as of old.

"It's too great, too high. What was it that holy saint, Father Mack, said to you, alanna? Sometimes I forget the words."

"That it would be a hard climb for me against winds and storms," said Dan.

"And, golly, it will! I am finding that out myself, Aunt Win."

"Go on, lad! There was more,—there was more," said the old woman, eagerly.

After a moment's pause, Dan added, in a voice that had grown low and reverent:

"That God was calling me to His own. And, Aunt Win,—Aunt Win" (there was a new light in the blue eyes uplifted to her face), "I am finding that out, too."

But it is a long way to the starlit

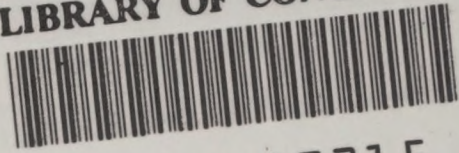
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heights of Aunt Winnie's dream,—a long, hard way, as Danny knows. We leave him climbing sturdily on over its rocky steeps and sandy stretches, but finding many a sunlit resting place on the way. Brightest of all these to Danny is Killykinick, where he goes every summer to spend a happy holiday,—to boat, to swim, to fish, to be “matey” again with the two old men, who look for his coming as the joy of the year.

“It's hurrah! hurrah, Aunt Win!” he wrote jubilantly one glad summer day. “Your Danny is at work before time, doing a little missionary business already. Two real true converts, Aunt Win,—baptized yesterday! It was the ‘Padre's preaching’ that set Jeb thinking first, and then he got hold of some of Great-uncle Joe's books. I sort of took a hand, and altogether we've got the dear old chaps into the fold. Peter and Andrew,—they chose the names themselves, even good old Neb's dull wits seeming to wake at his Master's call. Brother Bart's prayers for his old friends have been answered. The Light is shining on Killykinick, Aunt Win,—the Light is shining on Killykinick!”



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